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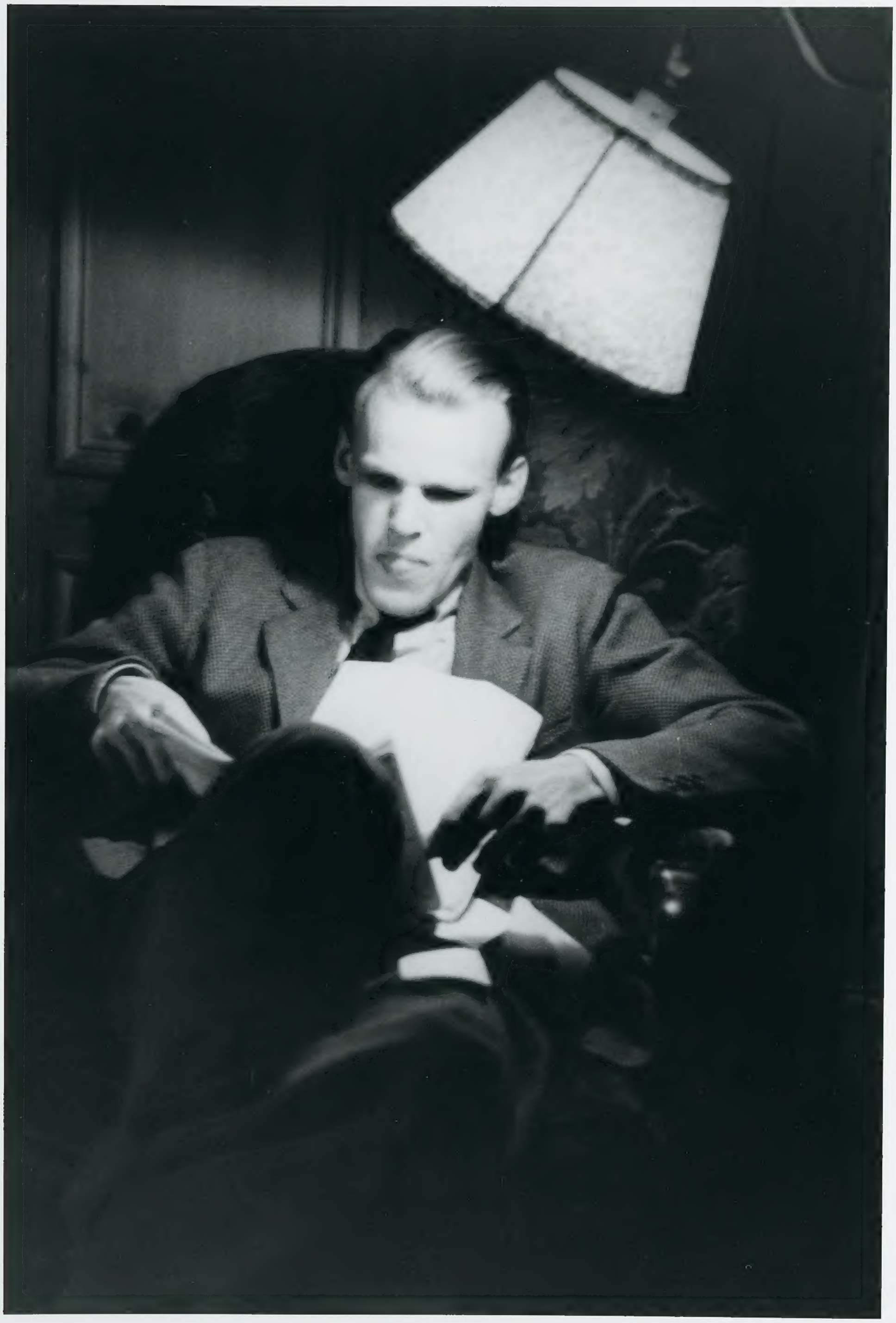

ART HISTORIAN

George A. Kubler

Interviewed by Richard Cándida Smith and Thomas F. Reese

VOLUME I

Art History Oral Documentation Project

Completed under the auspices
of the
Oral History Program
University of California
Los Angeles
and the
Getty Center for the History of
Art and the Humanities

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BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

PERSONAL HISTORY:

Born: July 26, 1912, Los Angeles.

Education: B.A., Yale University, 1934; M.A., Yale University, 1936; Ph.D., Yale University, 1940.

Spouse: Elizabeth Bushnell Kubler, married 1937; four children.

CAREER HISTORY:

Faculty, Yale University, 1938-46; professor, history of art, 1947-83.

AFFILIATIONS:

Academy of Arts and Letters, Mexico.

Academy of Arts and Letters, Spain.

HONORS AND AWARDS:

Guggenheim fellow, Mexico, 1943-44; Spain, 1952-53, 1956-57.

Alice Davis Hitchcock Award, 1962.

Charles Rufus Morey Prize, 1963.

Premio José de Figueiredo, 1973.

Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle, c. 1985.

Honorary member, Mexican Architectural Society, c. 1991.

BOOKS:

The Religious Architecture of New Mexico in the Colonial Period and since the American Occupation. Colorado Springs: Taylor Museum, 1940.

Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948. 2d ed. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1972.

Esthetic Recognition of Ancient Amerindian Art. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER:

Richard Cándida Smith, Associate Director/Principal Editor, UCLA Oral History Program. B.A., Theater Arts, UCLA; M.A., Ph.D., United States History, UCLA.

Thomas F. Reese, Deputy Director, Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities. B.A., Art History, Tulane University; M.A., Ph.D., Art History, Yale University.

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Kubler's home, New Haven, Connecticut.

Dates, length of sessions: March 27, 1991 (226 minutes); March 28, 1991 (156); March 29, 1991 (237); March 30, 1991 (140); November 18, 1991 (180); November 19, 1991 (265); November 20, 1991 (68).

Total number of recorded hours: 21.2

Persons present during interview: George Kubler, Elizabeth Kubler, Smith, and Reese.

CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW:

This is one in a series of interviews intended to examine the development of art history as a professional discipline and conducted under the joint auspices of the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities and the UCLA Oral History Program.

The interview is organized chronologically, beginning with Kubler's early life and education and continuing on through his graduate work and later teaching career at Yale University. Major topics discussed include Kubler's research and publications, courses he taught, his work in Europe and Latin America, and the development of an art history oriented toward non-European art.

EDITING:

Vimala Jayanti, editor, edited the interview. She checked the verbatim transcript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for

punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling, and verified proper names. Words and phrases inserted by the editor have been bracketed.

Kubler reviewed the transcript. He verified proper names and made minor corrections and additions.

Teresa Barnett, senior editor, prepared the table of contents, biographical summary, and interview history. Lisa Magee, editorial assistant, compiled the index.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives and are available under the regulations governing the use of permanent noncurrent records of the university. Records relating to the interview are located in the office of the UCLA Oral History Program.

TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE ONE

MARCH 27, 1991

SMITH: Okay, the traditional thing is a pretty straightforward question, which is when and where you were born.

KUBLER: Los Angeles, July 26, 1912.

SMITH: Was your family originally from Los Angeles?

KUBLER: No, they were both non-Californians. My father [Frederick William Kubler] was born in Akron, Ohio. My mother [Ellen Orloff Kubler] was born in Russia and was known to my father in Spain and they were married. He was a paper manufacturer and settled in Los Angeles.

SMITH: Because of the investment opportunities there?

KUBLER: I think he was employed in the Los Angeles office of a paper mill in Northern California.

SMITH: I understand that your father had training as an art historian.

KUBLER: Yes, yes, that was his trade in Germany. His father [Edward G. Kubler]--my grandfather--had a business in Akron. He was an industrial chemist. He'd been trained as an industrial chemist and he had a factory making Japan paint, which was important to carriage makers and to early automobile makers--black Japan paint. So he made quite a good thing of it and retired early. At the time his children were being educated, he thought U.S.

education was not worth very much, and he took the whole family to Brussels first so that they would learn French. Not Paris, of which he disapproved. Then they settled in Europe, and the children grew up both with an American childhood and an adolescence and student life in Europe.

SMITH: Did your father have an American identity?

KUBLER: Very much so, yes.

SMITH: So he did not feel himself a German who happened to be living in the United States?

KUBLER: No. No. He was an American, an American abroad.

SMITH: Okay. How did he come to do university study in Germany? Where did he study?

KUBLER: He studied at the University of Würzburg and he studied art history. And he studied with other art historians in other universities, which is customary in the German curriculum. So he studied with several well-known teachers. His dissertation was on an iconographic topic, which was at that time unusual, about the Virgin Mary--an aspect of the iconography of the Virgin Mary. It was printed, as was the custom in Germany. In 1906, I think. There are copies in libraries around Europe and in this country--two copies in the Yale [University] library.

SMITH: Well, I guess the obvious question is why didn't he assume a career as an art historian or a museum director?

KUBLER: That's what I think he wanted. I know that he came to New Haven hoping that there was an opening in the Yale [University] Art Gallery, which had been in existence since the 1860s. There was nothing for him there. It was a premature time to come to art history in this country because there were very few museums and there were no university posts. So he fell in with the family habit and became a businessman. His elder brother [Conrad Kubler] did the same thing. He took university degrees but ended up as a paper manufacturer. The two brothers had that in common. Very interesting--papers and business.

SMITH: Could you tell me a little bit about your mother's family background and her education?

KUBLER: She was brought up in Russia in a country setting and traveled a lot, and during her travels she married. She had a first marriage with a German and lived in Hamburg, and that marriage collapsed and she met my father, who was then traveling from museum to museum. I think they met in Spain. They were married and settled in Los Angeles.

SMITH: How long did you live in Los Angeles?

KUBLER: Until my father's death in 1920.

SMITH: So you were eight years old when he died.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Before we go beyond that, let me ask you about the

religious values that you and your family grew up with. Was it a religious household?

KUBLER: No, no. My grandfather's household may have been. He was Protestant, and he immigrated as a Protestant from a Catholic province of Germany. Probably there are many Kublers in Charleston, South Carolina, as early as the seventeenth century. Kubler is a name meaning "barrel maker," and it's a name common wherever there is wine--making barrels. There were Kublers in Charleston. And in Charleston he met my grandmother [Emile Duchard Kubler], who was a Huguenot Protestant. A Huguenot family, but she had been born in Illinois, in northern Illinois, around the Hennepin Canal. It was said in the family that she was the first white lady to be born in the Hennepin Canal area. [laughter] But the family had been in Charleston, and I think they met in Charleston.

SMITH: What about philosophical values? In terms of his training or just his general approach to life, was he influenced by philosophy?

KUBLER: In so much as an art historian generally is. He was an art historian carefully trained in Germany, and I think he was as philosophical as art historians were then in the early 1900s.

SMITH: But that is not something that you have memory of.

KUBLER: No. I remember him well and affectionately, and

I remember him as being interested in Japanese painting. I have a memory of him on his knees in Japanese dress doing brushwork--calligraphy--and we had Japanese housemen around the house we lived in and he took an interest in them and tried to speak Japanese with them.

SMITH: What about the world of culture and your family? Was it something that you grew up with?

KUBLER: Well, they were cultivated people. They were people of culture. My grandfather was a man of culture; my grandmother was far from illiterate. My uncles were university trained. One uncle was trained both in chemistry and in forensic law, and another uncle [George A. Kubler] was also a university man but suffered bad health. And then an aunt [Hermine Kubler Hassencamp], who did not go to university.

SMITH: I'm thinking-- In particular, if you know the historian Henry May, who's written about changes in middle-class life and values at the turn of the century, one of the things he's talked about--in fact, it's probably one of the theses that he's best known for--is the changing role in culture, that at the turn of the century or the First World War period, art and music had a particular role in the way families passed on values.

KUBLER: Yes. Yes, that was certain. My grandfather liked very much to draw, draw with ink--pencil and ink--

and the children were people with those interests also.

SMITH: So, in some sense, were you given an introduction to Western classics as a child?

KUBLER: I think so. Our house was full of books. My father was a disappointed professor. [laughter] He would have liked to be a professor.

SMITH: The other thing I wanted to touch on at this time was it seems that you had some sort of an introduction to Mexico while you were in California.

KUBLER: Oh, yes. That's true. Yes. My father took an interest in speculation in Mexican mines, gold and silver mines. I used to have a bundle of shares in a La Plata Gold and Silver Mining Company, of which he was the secretary. I don't know what became of that mine, but he would go down to inspect it and see to its running, and he'd come back with tales of his travels. I remember those interests. So Mexico was a topic of conversation in the house.

SMITH: Did your parents collect art?

KUBLER: Yes. Oh, yes. I had many, many very good Japanese prints, which I gave to my son [Edward Kubler], who is fascinated by them. So it goes on.

SMITH: So there was a very strong focus on Japanese culture?

KUBLER: Yes. Living in Los Angeles. My mother loved

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SMITH: So there was a very strong focus on Japanese culture?

KUBLER: Yes. Living in Los Angeles. My mother loved

California--she enjoyed it greatly--but she didn't want to live there anymore after he died. She wanted to travel. So we went to Europe, and she traveled mainly in France. She was visiting places she had known as a child. One of them was Le Touquet-Paris-Plage, and she put me in school in Le Touquet-Paris-Plage. She wanted to live in Le Touquet again. So we spent the fall and winter in Le Touquet-Paris-Plage, and she put me in a school which I enjoyed greatly. It was a school run by a man with a big beard and about forty children in the school. It was a one-room school. It was a private school. I don't remember anything much about the children, but he taught everything. There was no other teacher. He taught everything, and the children who weren't being taught by him were doing the devoir. He managed to teach everybody, and there were no grades, excepting some tickets he had printed like the old-fashioned tickets for a movie house, red tickets on each of which was printed "un bon point." [laughter] Each week there would be a distribution of tickets. Those who'd failed received no ticket, and those who had done the work received tickets. That was the grading system.

SMITH: At home what language were you using? What did you speak as a child?

KUBLER: Well, my father and mother spoke French to keep

me from knowing what they were saying. [laughter] They also spoke German and they also spoke Spanish. They used those languages intermittently. I remember landing in France at Cherbourg--the destruction after the war. We were on a launch from SS _Majestic_, and I asked my mother the meaning of the word _cuisine_--the label on the doorway of the landing vessel. That was my first word of French. [laughter] But I'd grown up with French. I'd grown up with French without understanding it.

SMITH: What did your mother consider to be her native language?

KUBLER: Her first language was Russian. She spoke German well.

SMITH: Would your father have considered English or German to be his first language?

KUBLER: English in Akron and then German at the university. First at _Gymnasium_ and then at the university.

SMITH: Until you went to France, it doesn't sound like there was an attempt to teach you a foreign language.

KUBLER: No, no. I learned French immediately with great ease in the school. I remember reading with great pleasure Pierre Loti's-- What is it? Anyhow, it was a novel of Pierre Loti's.

SMITH: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

KUBLER: Only child.

SMITH: Only child, okay. So you arrived in France in 1920. How long did you stay in France?

KUBLER: We stayed four years. Traveling constantly but with long residences in places that she remembered and wanted to visit again. Quite a series.

SMITH: So your preadolescence was spent in France.

KUBLER: Yes. And then she died. She died in Paris. Actually she committed suicide. She could not bear returning to this country. Ugly. I was then taken by my grandmother, who was living in Switzerland.

SMITH: Your father's mother or your mother's--?

KUBLER: My father's mother was living in Switzerland. She had lost her husband--my grandfather--in 1906 and she lived in Lucerne in the summer and in Lugano in the winter. So I spent several of those seasons with her, and then I was sent back to the U.S. to the care of a guardian who had been a lawyer to the family in Akron.

SMITH: So not a relative.

KUBLER: Not a relative. A lawyer. I liked him very much. His family was not very agreeable to me, but I liked him, and I went to school at the Western Reserve Academy, which was a very good school and which I enjoyed greatly.

SMITH: It was a boarding school.

KUBLER: Boarding school, yes.

SMITH: Okay, do you remember the lawyer's name?

KUBLER: Yes. T. W. Kimber. He managed my affairs. I inherited from my grandmother a substantial income, and he managed my affairs for a long time, until he died.

SMITH: So you went to Western Reserve Academy until you were eighteen?

KUBLER: Yes. That's right. And that was founded by a lot of professors from Yale who came out to the Western Reserve--emptying the excess population from Connecticut to the Western Reserve, which meant quite far west. This academy was in Hudson, Ohio, south of Cleveland. It was built as a replica of the brick row. It still stands. The brick row is still standing there in Ohio. [laughter]

SMITH: I was going to ask you where the connection to Yale was.

KUBLER: That's it. That's it.

SMITH: Because it didn't seem to be in your family.

KUBLER: No, it wasn't a family connection. It was the Western Reserve Academy. I liked that place, and I knew some people at Yale.

SMITH: Well, maybe we could talk just a little bit about the classes you took there and the interests you had at the academy, any particular teachers that were either role models for you or particularly important.

KUBLER: Harlan Wood was the Latin teacher. He was an elderly professor of Latin. Very mild and very effective. I liked him very much. There were a lot of other teachers. A man named Kitzmiller, who taught French, and his wife. They helped run the student newspaper. I worked on the student newspaper, and Kitzmiller was director. Things of that sort.

SMITH: So your interests were in the languages at that time.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Did you have any career interests?

KUBLER: Not yet. I was much interested in maps, and I wrote a paper for admission to Yale on cartography, which I'm told was liked. At Yale I had the good fortune to be a student of Henri Focillon.

SMITH: I think we'll get to Focillon in a little bit, but maybe if you don't mind staying back here at the academy, I have one more question about that. I was wondering if a school like that would encourage you to be thinking in terms of career.

KUBLER: Yes. Very much so. The headmaster was an admirable man named Boothby, Ralph Boothby. He took a serious interest in where his seniors were going to go to college and directed them very well, I think.

SMITH: So was it already in your mind that you might

become a university professor?

KUBLER: No, no.

SMITH: No. Do you think a writer?

KUBLER: Yes, I liked writing. I liked writing and I tried writing a novel, which I destroyed.

SMITH: Oh, you destroyed it? Too bad. You sure you don't have the carbon copy?

KUBLER: No. I hope not.

REESE: At the academy?

KUBLER: No. This was at Yale.

REESE: What do you remember about the daily life at the academy?

KUBLER: It was very regular, very stable, very quiet. It was an extraordinarily good school. It was at that time second only to Phillips Andover in the size of its endowment. That endowment was from a man who had made a fortune and was a banker of the world's fair at Chicago.

SMITH: It was the guardian who had suggested that you--

KUBLER: The guardian suggested that I go to this school, knowing that it was a good school. It was at its peak then, and it continues to be one of the best schools in the Midwest.

SMITH: Did you still have family in the Akron region?

KUBLER: No. No family remained. Friends of my grandfather, yes, whom I didn't know very well.

SMITH: What about your reading interests in high school? Were there authors that you were particularly--?

KUBLER: The library was excellent, and the librarian was a dear lady who paid a lot of attention to me, sort of guided me in reading. Mary Blake Eilbeck, a Philadelphian lady. She used to have me to tea. So it was a school of manners.

SMITH: A school of manners. You've mentioned Pierre Loti, which I would think would be a little sophisticated for a child. I mean, at that time you were ten, eleven, twelve. What was your reading interest?

KUBLER: I read constantly. I read all sorts. Jules Verne and--

SMITH: Let me rephrase the question a little bit, then. When did you start developing an interest in contemporary literature, modern literature?

KUBLER: At Yale.

SMITH: But experimental? At that time it was experimental?

KUBLER: Yes. And I wrote for the Yale Literary Magazine and took part in the Harkness Hoot, which was a journal of undergraduate protest against gothic Yale. [laughter]

SMITH: Okay, well, let's go to Yale. You started Yale in what year?

KUBLER: 'Twenty-nine. Arriving just in time for Bloody

Monday on Wall Street. October 8, was it? The crash. The crash didn't affect my finances. My guardian, Kimber, promptly bought a farm for me. I had a farm, [laughter] a 168-acre farm, which later was sold.

SMITH: Were you a scholarship student?

KUBLER: No, I paid my way. Tuition was $600.

SMITH: Yes. But that was quite a bit of money back then.

KUBLER: Yes. [laughter]

SMITH: It was a full year's wages for quite a few people.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Did you live in the residence halls on campus, then?

KUBLER: Yes, I was in the dormitories. This was before the college system. Then I went to Germany for a year to improve my German, because my German, which I'd learned in Switzerland, was Swiss German, peasant German, from the peasant children of the summer hotel. So I studied German and German literature.

SMITH: At Yale?

KUBLER: Yes. With [Carl] Schreiber.

SMITH: With Schreiber. Was that your initial major?

KUBLER: No. My major, fortunately, was something called History of the Arts and Letters.

SMITH: In 1929?

KUBLER: Yes. Yes, there was no art history department.

I graduated with the class of '34, owing to my absence in Germany during the Hitler period. I was in Munich when Hitler became chancellor and stayed in Munich during those dreadful months--reading Greek. I was enrolled in the university, and I read Greek because I had been rather shaky in the Greek I studied at Yale and I needed to redeem myself by reading more easily. So I read church fathers, patristic texts, with a man named [Fritz Joachim] von Rintelen, who was a very instructive professor who probably oriented me towards medieval studies, which I picked up when I returned to Yale--on to graduate school.

SMITH: I do want to talk about Germany, but let's continue with the undergraduate life at Yale. What I would like to do is get a picture of Yale culture in the early thirties. From some of the things I read, it seems like the school was in a fair degree of turmoil, as many Ivy League schools were, as they were in transition from gentlemen's schools to modern universities. Did you have any perception of the school being in conflict over what its role should be?

KUBLER: Very much so. Very much so. Which was crystallized in the appearance of the Harkness Hoot, which was a journal of protest, as I mentioned.

SMITH: Now, weren't you one of the organizers?

KUBLER: No, but I contributed to them. I remember

redesigning the undergraduate curriculum in twelve pages. [laughter]

SMITH: Why did you want to redesign the curriculum? Let's start with that.

KUBLER: Because it was not adequate as it stood.

SMITH: What was the undergraduate curriculum?

KUBLER: Well, the undergraduate curriculum was reading and then repeating what one had read in recitations. The courses were run as recitations, so that one showed having read the text by being able to regurgitate.

SMITH: From memory?

KUBLER: From memory, yes.

SMITH: Verbally or on paper?

KUBLER: Verbally. Sometimes on paper. There were some brilliant lecturers. I remember Robert [Dudley] French on Chaucer. I remember many of the lecturers--excellent lecturers. I was more interested in the lecture courses than in the recitations. But recitations were much too important.

SMITH: But were they the equivalent of seminar classes, then?

KUBLER: No. The recitations were run by young instructors who did not lecture but would check up on the reading. The reading was tested. It seemed like a waste of time. [laughter]

SMITH: Were there students who you knew who liked the system? Who felt it was good for them?

KUBLER: A lot of them had no criticism of it.

REESE: What about your perceptions of the social makeup of the Yale student body when you first arrived?

KUBLER: Oh, I fell into it easily. I didn't have any trouble. I thought the entry system was very good. In the entry system, that is-- Stacked one on top of the other, with the staircase. You knew a lot of the entry and you made friends easily that way.

SMITH: I'm sorry, I guess I'm not picturing it.

KUBLER: Yes. Well, it's like an apartment house with many entries, and these apartments are connected by the staircase.

SMITH: Oh, I see. Okay.

REESE: It's still the basis of the Yale college system, staircases.

KUBLER: The Yale colleges are built on the entry system, and it still subsists with the women students. The women students have redesigned it very intelligently, and the administration has taken their advice, namely, men on the ground floor and men on the top floor, where there is circulation--basement and attics--protecting the women in between.

REESE: How did you feel at Yale after your training at

the academy? Did you feel that your education was in many ways better and more disciplined than that of other people in the freshman class at Yale? What did you immediately feel?

KUBLER: No, I felt well prepared. I felt adequately prepared, and I found much that was of value in the courses I took at Yale, but I was critical of the system.

SMITH: What was the thrust of the changes that you wanted to see made?

KUBLER: Oh, I've forgotten. I've forgotten.

SMITH: Okay. [laughter] Well, what I'm wondering is, as you joined the faculty, if some of these changes manifested themselves in your own work as a teacher.

KUBLER: I think they had already come about. There was quite a change with the Depression. The whole system of instruction changed greatly. There were many more lecture courses and fewer recitations.

SMITH: Were there many students who were negatively affected by the Depression? People you went to school with?

KUBLER: The Depression didn't affect us very much.

SMITH: What about suffering in New Haven and the Connecticut area? Connecticut was a very industrial state at that time.

KUBLER: At that time it was much more peaceful than it is

now. It was still a small industrial town. The great change in population happened in the fifties, when over 50 percent became black families.

SMITH: Let's talk a little bit about the expectations for students. How many papers were you expected to write in a course and how frequently?

KUBLER: Well, there was a course called Daily Themes. One wrote a paper every day, a story.

SMITH: How long would the papers be?

KUBLER: They would be term papers. There were daily papers. There were weekly papers. There were monthly papers.

SMITH: So there was quite a bit of writing.

KUBLER: There was a lot of writing, yes.

SMITH: One thing I ran across-- It wasn't specifically about Yale. They were referring to Princeton [University] and Harvard [University] and Brown [University] and so on. A gentleman could go to school there and be exposed to many, many ideals but never encounter a single idea. I just wonder how you would view the accuracy of that. And, again, I'm not talking about an academically motivated student, but your average Yale product.

KUBLER: Well, I found much stimulus from the people teaching me. I remember a young man from the English department, whose name I've forgotten, who was constantly

encouraging in the direction of the history of ideas. Then I remember a seminar in historiography with J. M. S. Allison. That seminar was elementary, but for beginners a great eye-opener.

SMITH: Do you recall who you might have read in that seminar? Who were the historians they might have referred to?

KUBLER: He was a medievalist, and we would read medieval historians. All my work was drifting toward the Middle Ages. Then when [Marcel] Aubert and Focillon were appointed, from France--they were both medievalists--that clinched the medieval circuit. [laughter]

SMITH: You've mentioned French. He was the Chaucer scholar, and he was also your adviser, I understand.

KUBLER: Robert Dudley French, yes. He was the Chaucer specialist, and he became the first of the masters of the new college system in Jonathan Edwards [College]. I was one of the first students to live in that building, which opened in 1934. Robert French was its master.

SMITH: The English profession, as we now know, at that time was at war with itself between the philologists, on the one hand, and the critics, on the other hand.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Where did he fit in that?

KUBLER: I think he was a cultural historian. Robert Dudley French. His book on Chaucer [A Chaucer Handbook] is the proof.

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SMITH: In terms of his approach, then, he was interested more in providing a cultural context than in, say, the recitations aspect?

KUBLER: Yes. He was a cultural historian. That would be the proper designation for him. He used Chaucer as his method. Chaucer studies.

SMITH: Is there any way that you would say that he's influenced you, either as a teacher or as a scholar?

KUBLER: Well, he was an admirable person, and he had a great deal to do with the implanting of the British Oxbridge college plan, which was picked up by both Yale and Harvard. He guided its implantation here with great skill.

SMITH: In your work there is a concern for scientific rigor. Would you have viewed his approach to his cultural materials as being sufficiently methodological?

KUBLER: No. He was more interested in interesting students, awakening an interest in the students. He was extremely good at that. His lectures were always aimed at evoking interest.

SMITH: Well, when you became a teacher--for instance, when you were lecturing--wouldn't you be interested in

evoking interest? Let's say in an undergraduate lecture course.

KUBLER: Yes. Yes. Oh, yes.

SMITH: So there's always that. I mean, there's the question how the form affects the particular work that you're doing. What about his research methods?

KUBLER: Robert Dudley French?

SMITH: Yes.

KUBLER: Well, he wasn't highly regarded in the profession. He hadn't written enough.

SMITH: Okay. There's another person that I wanted to ask you about, which was Theodore Sizer.

KUBLER: Theodore Sizer was director of the [Yale University] Art Gallery. Of course, then the director of the art gallery was subordinate to the dean of the arts school, Everett Meeks. Everett Meeks presided over everything, including the drama school. Theodore Sizer was a very cultivated and interesting lecturer, but he didn't say very much. But he taught appreciation.

SMITH: Appreciation. Art appreciation?

KUBLER: Appreciation, yes.

SMITH: So it would be the history of Western art from--

KUBLER: Yes. And he knew a great deal about printmaking. I remember a seminar with him and a printmaker who was one of the college heads, whose name I've forgotten, and then

the university printer, Carl Rollins. So we got the whole package of books and prints and--

SMITH: Medieval manuscripts?

KUBLER: Medieval manuscripts.

SMITH: This is another funny quote, but a student from Yale in the 1920s said that at that time the universe stopped for Yale on July 14, 1789. Nothing was recognized of substance that happened after that date. Again, an exaggeration, I'm sure, but the medievalism that you've talked about, is that entrenched in the institution or is that because of your personal interests?

KUBLER: Well, medieval studies became dominant in a way that is not present today. Medieval studies were new--they were new, they were glittering new--and medieval studies were very attractive. I think many people were drawn to it at the time. But the current interest in medieval studies is very low. Before our time--my generation's time--I don't think medieval studies figured importantly at all. But there was a wave of interest in medieval studies.

REESE: I'm sure with the construction of the new college system it must have been important.

SMITH: What would you attribute that wave of interest to at that particular time? Was it an influence of personalities on the faculty?

KUBLER: Yes. And the general awakening of interest in the Middle Ages everywhere, in Europe as well as America.

SMITH: Because, actually, I think that really dates back to the 1880s, 1890s. We have even the formation of societies to resurrect jousting and that sort of thing. But also a lot of scholarship. Did it then hit Yale later than other institutions?

KUBLER: Yes. I think the concentration on medieval studies boiled up during the twenties and thirties. The Depression years were very favorable for medieval studies.

SMITH: Why is that? I mean, are you making a connection with the social aspects of the Depression?

KUBLER: Perhaps. There was a demand for medievalists.

REESE: That makes me think of religion at Yale. Was there any strong integration of religion--?

KUBLER: No. Not in my case.

SMITH: Another faculty person that I wanted to ask you about was Richard Swann Lull.

KUBLER: Oh, yes, the paleontologist. Yes. He was director of Peabody Museum [of Archaeology and Ethnology]. Much respected and a good lecturer.

SMITH: What courses would you take from him?

KUBLER: I didn't study with him.

SMITH: Oh, you didn't?

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: Okay. Your training in anthropology came when?

KUBLER: Well, I picked it up on the way. I don't think I ever took a course. I picked it up. I read anthropology and I had friends with whom I talked anthropology. But I never studied it separately.

SMITH: What about archaeology?

KUBLER: Well, when I was a graduate student I went to New York University to the Institute of Fine Arts, which was a European implantation, quite different from other places of study. There I studied with Karl Lehmann-Hartleben. My Greek was useful, and I studied Greek and Roman art with him and was very seriously interested in classical archaeology. When Lehmann-Hartleben began his excavations at Samothrace, he wanted me to come with him and join his large crew there. But at that time the war was already very much in the way, and I was looking for a way to do archaeology in this country. So I picked New Mexico and began these studies of New Mexico, which were mainly architectural, but semi-archaeological.

SMITH: I was going to ask you, if you say archaeology, then why not have picked the Anasazi.

KUBLER: I wanted it closer to the present. It's such a living presence in New Mexico, the colonial architecture.

REESE: Richard raised earlier this question of the medieval versus the modern. Clearly, a lot of your close

circle of friends were associated with the Yale Lit [Yale Literary Review] and the Harkness Hoot. Did you meet them right as you came to Yale as a freshman and sophomore?

KUBLER: Yes. They were all around, yes. They were both ahead of me and after me.

SMITH: Who were the people that you felt closest to?

KUBLER: People like Richard Bissell and a whole group of people at the Elizabethan Club. The Elizabethan Club was a center, with its very good library and daily tea and conversation and very good company. People like Walt [W.] Rostow, Eugene Rostow, Richard Bissell, Max Millikan--son of the physicist [Robert A. Millikan]--were in this dingy little house down on College Street. That was a very pleasant place where we educated each other.

SMITH: And you said earlier that you were rebels.

KUBLER: Yes. Trying to take part in revising the course of study with this journal called Harkness Hoot.

SMITH: The Harkness Hoot seems to have been interested in modern art, modern literature.

KUBLER: Very much so. Through the founders, William Hale Harkness and Selman Rodman. Selman Rodman is still around. He lives in Haiti and he is the grandfather of Haitian art.

SMITH: Modern art, modern literature is a big area. Were there particular aspects of it that you--individually and

the group that you were a part of--were more inclined towards? I mean, for instance, would the surrealists have interested you?

KUBLER: Less. I think our taste as a group was not avant-garde. We followed it, we knew what was going on, and it seemed extravagant.

SMITH: Did you like Ezra Pound or T. S. Eliot?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: I mean, would that have been more--?

KUBLER: Oh, yes. We accepted them.

SMITH: So perhaps you were looking for a revived sense of cultural tradition, as opposed to a rupture?

KUBLER: Yes. And criticism such as the Harkness Hoot was part of a therapy.

SMITH: A therapy of what, though?

KUBLER: It was the therapy for malaise with the present world of that time.

REESE: And where did you think the malaise came from?

KUBLER: Politics.

SMITH: Politics. I know that in part these are unfair questions because we go past where we start from. So, I mean, for T. S. Eliot, of course, the malaise has to do with being divorced from the eternal and its reflections in natural life and social life. Was that religious sensibility prevalent in the Harkness group?

KUBLER: No. They were much more materialists.

REESE: What about their interest in different literatures--French, German, English, American? Was it evenly distributed or did it--?

KUBLER: I think so. I think so. We read everything that interested us and we read widely, in translation when necessary.

SMITH: So perhaps the answer to the malaise was a critical thought, the ability to look at things.

KUBLER: Well, that we had the Hoot for.

SMITH: I know it's somewhat ancillary, but I would like to talk about your brief career as a fiction writer. You published three stories, and they seem to be portraits of malaise. Were those personal, autobiographical?

KUBLER: No. Not really, no. They were stories that seemed pertinent and interesting, so I told them. But I desisted from storytelling.

SMITH: Perhaps, since you mentioned the novel, couldn't you at least tell us what it was about?

KUBLER: Oh, I've forgotten. I've forgotten. I've forgotten.

SMITH: What happened?

KUBLER: I took it with me to Germany and wrote quite a lot on it, and I threw it all away.

SMITH: Okay. All right. I'll respect the veil.

KUBLER: I really wiped it out.

SMITH: What about Egbert Miles? To get back to some of the faculty.

KUBLER: Egbert Miles. Oh, yes, he's a mathematician. Oh, yes. He was a man who spoke with great clarity about mathematics. I enjoyed his conversation very much. He was a fellow in Jonathan Edwards College, which is where I knew him.

SMITH: When you were a graduate student, then.

KUBLER: Yes, and later. How did you know of Egbert Miles?

SMITH: I've got tons of notes here.

KUBLER: Ah, yes. There were two Miles. Egbert was the mathematician.

SMITH: Typically at this time, students were required to take philosophy, a senior seminar from the president of the university or a senior person in philosophy. Was there a course like that at Yale that you took?

KUBLER: No. I don't remember one. I would have gotten the equivalent in history with Allison, the seminar in historiography.

SMITH: Then, of course, we need to talk about Meeks.

KUBLER: Everett Meeks. He was an egg-shaped man. [laughter] He was wider than tall--almost--and an architect. He was an architect and he was a great

authority and he taught a general course on history of architecture that was followed by hundreds of students. He was very thorough. It was a drill. It was a drill in the whole history of architecture.

SMITH: Would it have had a beaux-arts--?

KUBLER: It had a beaux-arts background. His taste was beaux arts.

SMITH: So what he would have considered good contemporary architecture would have been neoclassical revival?

KUBLER: And we disagreed with him. Yes. We were looking at contemporary architecture.

SMITH: Were you familiar with what was happening in Germany and in France with Corbusier?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: You were following that?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: And you liked that? Did you like modern architecture?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Why?

KUBLER: It was a change. It was a change, and it looked promising. Then it grew tedious.

SMITH: For instance, would your taste have been more towards the Frank Lloyd Wright craftsman style or toward the German International, the Bauhaus?

KUBLER: I admired Wright. I admired Wright and made efforts to follow his work.

REESE: When do you remember first hearing Meeks's lecture? How early?

KUBLER: I think I followed his course as a sophomore. That would have been 1930 to '31.

REESE: Now, is that a class that one would have taken as part of the History of the Arts and Letters?

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: So it would have been in the general curriculum.

KUBLER: It was in the general curriculum. It was attended by very large audiences, and one was obliged to keep a notebook illustrated with clippings. So National Geographic and travel magazines were caught up and commented on. The lectures were very clear and sound, except for his beaux-arts limitations.

REESE: Did he use slide projection?

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: Single slides or--? Do you remember?

KUBLER: Single slides, yes.

REESE: And it had a very strong French component?

KUBLER: Yes. It was very, very French.

REESE: And the Middle Ages also?

KUBLER: And the Middle Ages, oh, yes. It was the whole history of architecture.

SMITH: For instance, the competencies at the end, would the test have been primarily concerned that you knew dates and buildings or would it have been analytic?

KUBLER: It was very factual--very factual. Recognition and memory.

SMITH: So, for instance, they might show you a building that you had not studied in class and then ask you to connect it to buildings that you had studied?

KUBLER: I don't think it was that imaginative.

REESE: Did you draw at all? Buildings or--

KUBLER: I remember sketching a lot during the lectures.

SMITH: The History of the Arts and Letters was a humanities program, but was it part of the College of Fine Arts?

KUBLER: No. It was in Yale College. It was in Yale College, and it was a possible major--History of Arts and Letters. It continued until the Department [of Art History] was founded in 1940.

SMITH: I guess it's my understanding that art history was taught as an adjunct to the art practicum.

KUBLER: Yes. It was originally taught in the art courses, various art courses in painting and sculpture. The [Yale] Art School goes back to the Civil War.

SMITH: Did you take painting history or sculpture history?

KUBLER: No, no.

REESE: It's interesting that in the pieces that you did for the Harkness Hoot, the artist emerges as an important figure from very early. Did you clearly see yourself as wanting to follow the artist, either as a writer or as a painter or as an architect?

KUBLER: No. My thought was never to become one but to know more about them as historical personages. I'm trying to recover the temper of the time, of being an undergraduate. It's difficult.

SMITH: I have to ask you about Walt Rostow, just because he is such a notorious figure in the 1960s.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: If you could just talk a little about him as a fellow undergrad.

KUBLER: Well, the brothers were New Haven boys and named for Walt Whitman and Eugene Victor Debs by their parents. [laughter] There was another child in the family who was named for another poet I've forgotten. But the Rostows were brilliant--of extraordinary brilliance--both of them. They were about three years apart and they excelled in everything and they were part of this crowd.

SMITH: The image that the Elizabethan Club conjures up for me, the way you describe it--and it may be incorrect, which is why I want to pursue it a bit--is that it

conjures up images that one sees in English movies of Oxbridge life in the 1930s or 1920s.

KUBLER: Well, that was very much the thought of the founder, who was a book collector and endowed the club with a very respectable collection of old books. The idea was simply conversation about books. The Elizabethan Club was about literature. The conversation was generally very good. One went for conversation.

SMITH: What about Freud? Was Freud a subject of conversation?

KUBLER: Yes, yes. Not center stage.

SMITH: Not center stage?

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: As he was other places.

KUBLER: T. S. Eliot was center stage. Ezra Pound was center stage.

REESE: Thomas Mann?

KUBLER: Thomas Mann, no. The Germans didn't figure very much.

SMITH: You know, there's a controversy in the study of modernism whether German modernism had any role to play in influencing Anglo-American modernism, whether it was not strictly from the French. I mean, were you reading Baudelaire and Lautréamont?

KUBLER: Yes. I think we were much more French oriented

than German. German was not part of the studies of most of us. I'm speaking for the undergraduates. German studies were not very important, and they were taught by a very dull man, Carl Schreiber. They didn't have much drawing power. But French literature did.

SMITH: Who would be the French authors that would have been center stage?

KUBLER: Proust. My reading was more in older nineteenth century.

SMITH: Balzac? Stendhal?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Were you already introduced to Bergson before you met Focillon?

KUBLER: Yes, I had read Bergson, Henri Bergson.

SMITH: Did you find his thought sympathetic to your interests?

KUBLER: Yes, yes. I never had the direct experience of Bergson, as I had of Focillon.

SMITH: Right.

KUBLER: So Focillon outshone Bergson.

REESE: The Elizabethan Club was largely organized by you students, as opposed to a faculty mentor who would lead discussion?

KUBLER: No, there was no faculty supervision. Graduate students were important. Graduate students were more

important than faculty. Faculty were less visible than graduate students. I remember listening to graduate students with more profit than listening to the undergraduates.

REESE: So it was really the locus of intellectual enlightening.

KUBLER: It was. It was. The best minds seemed to be there--from the graduate school and from the college.

REESE: Now, you also had in the Harkness Hoot several people like the Rostows with interest in politics and--?

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: This tended to separate itself from the literary group? Or did they in fact try to find--?

KUBLER: It melted. It melted together. Condensation was general.

SMITH: Were there Marxists involved in this circle?

KUBLER: Oh, yes.

SMITH: What variety, I guess I should ask.

KUBLER: I don't remember any activists, but people who'd read Das Kapital.

SMITH: Okay.

KUBLER: A literary acquaintance.

SMITH: Das Kapital can be read from a literary point of view, but yet it pretends to be a scientific work at the same time.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: I mean, I wonder if there is a tension within the intellectual formation of that generation between aesthetic interests and scientific pretensions.

KUBLER: Well, with respect to Marxism I don't remember a serious Marxist among them. The Rostows were not serious Marxists, but they knew the literature.

SMITH: Actually, I wanted to generalize a little bit more. If there was a desire to find a totalizing scientific approach to interpreting experience, which was really aesthetically derived but took the form of searching for schema that could appear scientific and in fact probably were scientific in some of their formal attributes--

KUBLER: Are you speaking of undergraduate aspirations?

SMITH: Yes, aspirations.

KUBLER: I think that's a fair estimate, and the amount of activism was nil. There wasn't enough of it to comment on.

REESE: Did poets like e. e. cummings come in to the campus and--?

KUBLER: Yes. Oh, yes.

REESE: Through the Elizabethan Club?

KUBLER: Very often.

SMITH: It does sound very similar to what other people

I've talked to have said about their experiences at Oxford [University] in particular--the Auden circle.

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: Well, reading the Harkness Hoot, too, there's a great sense of experiment, anticipation of what will come next, announcements: "In the next issue this will appear." So you have the sense of constant movement.

KUBLER: And a lot of the pleasure of shocking without being radical. We shocked but we were not radical.

REESE: Was it considered, though, to be a critique of the Yale Lit or a splinter organization?

KUBLER: It was in opposition.

REESE: So that the Yale Lit would have been interpreted by members of the Harkness Hoot in what way? In terms of the values.

KUBLER: Well, the Hoot was doing what the Lit wouldn't: a certain amount of social criticism, a certain amount of criticism of the university, a certain amount of criticism of the norms of imaginative writing.

SMITH: Were there other universities that you would look to and say, "This is more how Yale should be structured"?

KUBLER: I think we looked in that way on the English universities--Oxford, Cambridge.

SMITH: So the development of the English system was very much something that you had been agitating for.

KUBLER: Yes. We were affected by that.

REESE: Yet, ironically, within a group with very strong French interest as well.

KUBLER: Yes. That's right, yes.

SMITH: I have here a list of courses that Tom has pulled out that were from the Yale catalog--

KUBLER: Oh, yes.

SMITH: I'm wondering if you took Sizer's class, Introduction to the Fine Arts?

KUBLER: I did.

SMITH: Yes. And we've talked about that.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: What about Taylor's class on pictorial art?

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: Meeks's class, Introduction to Architecture?

KUBLER: Yes. With great profit.

SMITH: Great profit in what sense?

KUBLER: It was a drill, it was a memory drill.

SMITH: In your own career, have you taught architectural survey courses?

KUBLER: Yes. I didn't teach in that way.

SMITH: Maybe you could briefly compare your methodology with Meeks's methodology.

KUBLER: Oh, mine was very different.

SMITH: In what way?

KUBLER: It was more like Focillon. It was more French.

SMITH: And what do you mean by that?

KUBLER: It was not beaux-arts French. I mean, we will get more into Focillon-- It was Focillon French. [laughter] The humanist approach of Focillon was so different from Meeks's approach.

REESE: You would describe it as formalist?

KUBLER: No. Meeks had been at the [Ecole des] Beaux-Arts, and he transplanted that history of architecture to Yale. It was a drill and nothing more--a memory drill. But Focillon's was a history of ideas.

SMITH: As expressed through the architecture?

KUBLER: As expressed through the architecture, or of ideas emerging from architecture.

SMITH: Okay. What about Eberhardt's class, History of Sculpture?

KUBLER: No, I didn't.

SMITH: Sizer's class on graphic arts?

KUBLER: Yes. I did follow that. That was done with others, with assistants. One saw the techniques and one took part in the techniques to a certain measure.

SMITH: So, like, paper manufacturing or binding.

KUBLER: Yes. Yes. It was a very practical course designed for the Art School more than for the college.

SMITH: Baur's course on Greek architecture?

KUBLER: Yes, P. D. C. Baur. I did not follow that, no.

SMITH: Roman and Etruscan art?

KUBLER: Who taught that?

SMITH: Baur, again.

KUBLER: Baur, no, no. My study of ancient art was when I went to New York University to the Institute of Fine Arts.

SMITH: Stevens on medieval architecture?

KUBLER: I didn't follow that either.

SMITH: Thompson's course on medieval Italian art?

KUBLER: Dan Thompson?

SMITH: Yes.

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: Or Renaissance Italian art?

KUBLER: No. Whose was that?

SMITH: Dan Thompson.

KUBLER: Dan Thompson. No.

REESE: These were drawn from catalogs for the period in which you were there.

SMITH: [Chauncey] Tinker's course, Modern English Painting?

KUBLER: Yes, I did. I did follow that.

SMITH: Maybe we could discuss that class a little.

KUBLER: Yes. He was an extraordinarily dramatic lecturer. He was acting while lecturing. He lectured to move people, and he was moving. He was moving. People would weep and he would weep.

SMITH: So I presume the class would start somewhere in the beginning of the eighteenth century?

KUBLER: Yes, yes.

SMITH: When would it end? When's the end of modern British painting?

KUBLER: Modern British painting ended, oh, I think, with the romantics.

SMITH: Did he ever make it to the pre-Raphaelites?

KUBLER: No, I don't think so. [laughter] He was highly selective.

SMITH: Okay. And that, I take it, was not very much formal analysis.

KUBLER: No. It was more anecdotal. It was a bridge. There were many bridges into literary history.

SMITH: Is that what you would consider cultural history?

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: Let's see. Stevens's class on Renaissance architecture?

KUBLER: I didn't follow that.

SMITH: In Tinker's class on painting, ultimately at the end, your competency, was that like Meeks's class? You were shown the painting on a slide and you identified it, or were you expected to comment on some basis?

KUBLER: I think there was a test at the end, yes. A slide test. I've forgotten. I've forgotten.

SMITH: I mean, it sounds like you really had a schizophrenic approach to art education at the time. It was either extremely formalistic in the sense of memorize the buildings, or it was very emotional and anecdotal.

KUBLER: Yes. Right. Memorizing works a lot is a necessary drill, and probably not enough of it is done now.

REESE: Were these classes very popular?

KUBLER: Very popular, very popular.

SMITH: So this is not attendance required, but rather they naturally drew.

KUBLER: I think they drew, yes. Dean Meeks, of course, would draw two, three hundred people, and they would go through this drill.

SMITH: Well, for many people drill is much easier than having to think about the work.

KUBLER: Yes. And you're obliged to keep this notebook going.

SMITH: In your own courses--let's say in an introductory course to architecture--how many buildings would you reasonably expect a student to know at the end of the course? As opposed to how many buildings Meeks would expect a student to know.

KUBLER: Far fewer. But in much more detail.

SMITH: In much more detail. But let's give-- Forty

buildings?

KUBLER: Well, for example, cathedrals, I would take one cathedral apart for an early example and another one for a late example.

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SMITH: In the course on the cathedral you would take an early example?

KUBLER: I would take an early cathedral and a late one and then analyze their structure and their ornament. And in the course of that refer to other buildings where the same process appears.

SMITH: We're talking about an undergraduate--?

KUBLER: Yes. This would be in an undergraduate lecture. Rather than spreading their time over too many buildings, spread their time on only a few buildings.

SMITH: What would be an example of the kind of pairings that you would make in the cathedral course? What would be the cathedrals that you might choose?

KUBLER: Well, it would depend upon what I wanted to say with them. I might build a course around that choice.

SMITH: Now, would that choice have to do with things that you were pursuing in your personal research at that time and questions that you needed to answer?

KUBLER: Yes. It might very well, yes. I remember giving a course on rib vaults. Rib vaults can take a whole year.

REESE: Richard had asked earlier if you had any real

sense of what was going on, let's say at Harvard [University] or Princeton [University], in terms of art history and literary studies. Were those worlds very different from Yale [University]?

KUBLER: No. Not at all. Princeton was very close to us because they, too, were investing in the interest in the Middle Ages that seems to be such a strong feature of the Depression period. They, too, had undergraduate studies that were mostly medieval, as we did. I don't know about Harvard. Harvard also participated in it with [Kenneth J.] Conant and others. But that is a phenomenon in American universities--the interest in the Middle Ages during the Depression.

REESE: Did the phenomenon of students who had studied at Harvard or Princeton or faculty coming here to give lectures exist during this period?

KUBLER: Yes. There was a lot of exchange that way, and the enrollments in medieval studies were always big during the Depression. Not before the Depression and not since.

SMITH: So you would liken it to the Depression and not to who the faculty happened to be.

KUBLER: Well, it involved also a restudy of the Middle Ages from the ground up that was taking place. That's what was interesting. That was what was interesting--this capacity in the history of ideas that the Middle Ages

offered.

SMITH: Could you elaborate on that a little bit more? I think I'm getting a glimpse of what you mean, but I think more because I'm connecting it with other things I know.

KUBLER: It was apparent that a lot could be said about the Middle Ages that hadn't been said--put it that way. That with respect to the capacity of a topic to entertain a large number of new ideas-- Now, that was possible in medieval studies. Now they're all taken for granted.

SMITH: Were you interested in new ideas about Scholastic philosophy?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Was it social history?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: So across the board?

KUBLER: Yes. Across the board. Anything that was useful.

SMITH: Okay. Let me-- I'm not a medievalist, but let me throw out a few names. The first one of which would be obvious, just to get a reaction. Henri Pirenne?

KUBLER: Henri Pirenne? Yes, he's a political historian and not an art historian.

SMITH: No, I know.

KUBLER: Pirenne is a handbook, an important--

SMITH: Though he also wrote a book on the medieval city

[Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade].

KUBLER: Medieval city? Yes, that's right.

SMITH: Everybody had to read it when I was at [University of California] Berkeley.

KUBLER: Ah, yes.

SMITH: I am interested if there is a relationship between that history and art history. Perhaps this writing had been developed in political and social history and then art history begins to-- Perhaps "catch up" isn't the right word, but there is a new way of looking at medieval society, and then one has to look at the art.

KUBLER: That's part of this novelty, this novel world that remained to be examined and explored--a relationship between the society and the work.

SMITH: What about Etienne Gilson? Was his work influential? Were you introduced to him at this time?

KUBLER: I remember Gilson but not as of first importance to me.

SMITH: The next name I ask partly because Ernst Kantorowicz, who left Germany, came to Berkeley and had tremendous influence on the avant-garde poets of California.

KUBLER: Yes. Kantorowicz was known to me. Especially through [Erwin] Panofsky.

SMITH: So they would come later, then.

KUBLER: Yes. I studied with Panofsky at the Institute [of Fine Arts, New York University] studies on medieval art that are of major importance.

REESE: We left out another dimension of undergraduate education at Yale, which is the museum and the collection. What remembrances do you have of going to museums, either on your own or as a part of class work?

KUBLER: Less than there is today. There was less traveling around for academic purposes than there is now.

SMITH: [to Reese] You had a couple more questions about the Harkness Hoot and the Elizabethan Club?

REESE: As you were talking, too, about the Middle Ages, I was thinking about this search for something new and critical, thinking about the kind of English models, but then thinking too about the fact that these colleges are being built in a way which must have had not only the English models but other ideas deeply rooted in the Middle Ages about the productive thing, the Depression and the attempt of a country to rebuild itself in some way. That all of that was there.

KUBLER: The Hoot ridiculed the medieval colleges [laughter]--that was part of the Hoot's stock in trade--and suggested that the money would have been better invested on curriculum than on buildings. [laughter]

SMITH: As an undergrad were you beginning to develop professional interests? Had you made your "entrance," as it were, into art history?

KUBLER: When I went to the Institute of Fine Arts I made that.

SMITH: But that's as a graduate student.

KUBLER: That's as a graduate student. Yes, I went directly from Yale College to the Institute.

SMITH: This is shifting a little bit, but why did you go off as a sailor? You became a seaman at one point.

KUBLER: Oh, that's right. That's right.

SMITH: It doesn't sound like you needed the money, particularly.

KUBLER: I wanted to go to Latin America. I told my uncle [George A. Kubler] that I'd like to go to Latin America, and he arranged for me to go on a fruit ship as an able-bodied seaman. That took up a summer.

REESE: Did you go back to stay with the guardian [T. W. Kimber] during the summers or did you stay in New Haven?

KUBLER: Oh, I stopped going back to Akron when I graduated.

SMITH: When you graduated from Yale?

KUBLER: Yes. I was twenty-one. I was no longer a minor. [laughter]

REESE: Did you get off of this ship when it went to Latin

America?

KUBLER: Oh, yes.

REESE: Do you remember the ports of call?

KUBLER: Oh, surely, surely, yeah. Colón [Panama] and the Colombian ports and the Venezuelan ports. It was a Caribbean circuit.

REESE: Did it take you to Yucatán at all?

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: Then your next lark--and I'll call it a lark--was to go to Germany?

KUBLER: I went when it would have been my senior year.

SMITH: So that was the summer of '32, then, that you went?

KUBLER: Summer of '32, yes. Summer of '32. And the end of '33, that year.

SMITH: You started out at Berlin.

KUBLER: No. I went to Berlin in the summer of '31. That was another trip at Carl Schreiber's suggestion. He didn't like my Swiss accent. He said I ought to learn German properly. So I attended the school for foreigners at the University of Berlin for the summer and read German and spoke German and corrected my German.

SMITH: What were your impressions of Germany at that time?

KUBLER: In '31?

SMITH: Yes, in '31.

KUBLER: Oh, it was a banquet, a banquet of things and ideas. And Berlin was fascinating--very different from Berlin in '33. It was the end of the Weimar Republic.

SMITH: Of course the Depression had already--

KUBLER: But what an interesting place it was.

SMITH: So it enticed you back the following year.

KUBLER: Yes. Yes, that's right.

SMITH: Now, when you decided to spend a year in Germany, was this part of rebelling against Yale? Were you quitting Yale, in a way?

KUBLER: I was wanting to read and write, and I enrolled in the university and took courses such as the one with [Fritz Joachim] von Rintelen on the church fathers. Reading church fathers in Greek was interesting. Von Rintelen was interesting. And then I was fudging around with a novel.

SMITH: Of course you were there during the political turmoil.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: What kind of things did you observe?

KUBLER: Well, there were the things everyone knows: the brown shirts and the brutalization of the public. I knew some Jewish people who were owners of a department store. They had a villa in Schwabing, and I was a guest there.

After Hitler became chancellor, these good people were woken up in the night by brown shirts and stood up in their garden and lined up and then they were subjected to a mock execution with rifles--but no ammunition. Then they were told to go back to bed and the brown shirts left. Brutalization.

SMITH: In the interview I did with Wolfgang Herrmann, one of the conclusions that he drew was that the German university and the German academic tradition had a fundamental responsibility for what happened. And he mentioned that Rudolf Wittkower had drawn the same conclusions. I'm not saying whether that's right or wrong; it's their personal truth. I'm wondering if other people that you knew in German academia had some sense that the idealist tradition within scholarship had some connection or responsibility for the triumph of the Nazis. People that you knew, people that you talked to.

KUBLER: No, I don't. I don't remember any. I don't remember any discussion of that kind. On the contrary, in among the friends I had, the feeling was that universities were being destroyed by radical movement from inside. Then with replacements, the process was moving faster and faster and destruction from the inside.

SMITH: I have a note that you took lectures from Wilhelm Pinder. Is that correct?

KUBLER: Yes. I heard lectures by Pinder.

SMITH: Was that in Munich or did you go to Leipzig?

KUBLER: That was in Munich. He was in Munich at that time.

SMITH: Okay, he had moved then. He, of course, became notorious as a Nazi.

KUBLER: Yes, that's right.

SMITH: Do you recall anything in particular about his lectures?

KUBLER: No. They were medieval lectures. I don't remember that they had any political content.

SMITH: Now, I noticed from some of the background that we've been doing that some of your thinking gets connected with Generationfolge theory. Is that fortuitous, or is there a connection?

KUBLER: I don't see how one can dispense with the idea of generational sequence, but I would leave it there.

SMITH: Okay.

KUBLER: Generationfolge, what did Pinder make of it?

SMITH: Well, that was his major contribution to German art history, the sense that each generation had its own Schicksal. You could not look at a particular time frame as a whole. You had to look at generations within that time frame, because they each had their own fate, their own historical question that had been given to them by the

World Spirit. I'm not saying that this is part of your idea, but this is what is part of what he made out of the Generationfolge.

KUBLER: Mine would be much more relaxed. With him it was a political opportunity.

SMITH: You spent a year in Germany, so maybe you could compare German university life with Yale and make some value judgments.

KUBLER: Well, when I came back to Yale and after finishing the undergraduate work, I went to the New York University Institute of Fine Arts, and that was a taste of Germany. That was filled with Germans, with German refugees. That was a heavenly, heavenly spread of extraordinary people.

SMITH: I know it's hard, but let's--assuming that we can abstract the personalities out of the situations--just look at the systems and what they are intended to achieve, the kinds of educational opportunities and challenges.

KUBLER: Well, I like the German system in principle--focusing on the seminar. The seminar is the instrument, even though the seminar might have five hundred people in it--but that was the deteriorated form. The German system seemed to be very commendable, and work at the Institute in New York University was very much of that style.

REESE: Was the literary society as big a feature of the

German educational system as it was of Yale? Things equivalent to the Elizabethan Club?

KUBLER: Oh, no, no. I suppose the Burschenschaften, but I didn't have any part of that.

SMITH: My reading of this is that in the post-Civil War period in the United States, it was actually conceived that the literary clubs were the main place where your education took place.

KUBLER: Oh, yes.

SMITH: And you went to your classes in order to get things to talk about.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: And facts. But the actual formation, educational formation, would be--

KUBLER: Well, I guess that's the way they worked, yes. That's the way the Lizzie Club worked.

SMITH: So it really was a continuation of--

KUBLER: Yes. It was a continuation of the work you were doing in classrooms.

REESE: Could you describe a little bit, both in Berlin and then in Munich, your daily routines--where you lived, friendships, attendance in classes, attendance in museums, exhibitions. A sense of what that experience did for you in those years.

KUBLER: Well, it was much less close-knit than at Yale.

At Yale we'd known each other for two, three, four years. But as a foreign visitor to Berlin or Munich, I was a stranger, I was an outsider. I had no social life whatever, excepting for acquaintances and friends that I picked up, but they weren't really university people.

REESE: Did you live in the campus environment?

KUBLER: No. I had an apartment in Munich. It was a pleasant apartment. I could entertain there, and I had friends who were not university people to whom I'd been sent by my relatives. So I didn't take part in German university life either in Berlin or in Munich.

REESE: But your relatives, then, still had many friends in Munich and Berlin?

KUBLER: Yes. My aunt [Hermine Kubler Hassencamp] lived in Rastatt, where her husband [Herbert Hassencamp] was a government official, and she introduced me to a number of her friends in Munich. They were the people I saw. But they had nothing to do with the university.

REESE: Was the art experience very strong for you then? You were reading Greek in Munich, but were you going to exhibitions and museums regularly?

KUBLER: Yes. Oh, yes.

REESE: Contemporary art exhibitions?

KUBLER: Yes, whatever was showing. Theater, lots of theater. Theater was very lively, opera, lots to do.

There was lots to do.

SMITH: Were you going to the expressionists?

KUBLER: Yes. Everything as it came along.

SMITH: I have two things. One is very practical. I'd like, just for the record, to pin down your languages and where you learned each of them. And we could start with English.

KUBLER: English, well, I learned English in Los Angeles. [laughter] When I was with my mother [Ellen Orloff Kubler] in France, I spoke no English at all and I spoke French all the time. I learned French very rapidly. So that's that. German I learned painfully. I learned it first in Switzerland with my grandmother [Emile Duchard Kubler] in a summer hotel at Selisberg overlooking Lake Lucerne. It was harvest time--hay time, haymaking time. I took part as a guest in the hotel. I took part in hay mowing with boys who were employed to work the farm. So I learned German, really, from them.

SMITH: That's Alamannic, that's the Swiss--

KUBLER: But that was my Swiss German, you see. So when I came to Yale and studied with Carl Schreiber, he said he found my accent scheusslich. [laughter] And he said I should go to Berlin and straighten it out--which I did.

REESE: Did you speak German or French with your grandmother?

KUBLER: We spoke English.

REESE: English?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: So you learned German in Berlin and Munich, really.

KUBLER: Yes. In Berlin and Munich.

SMITH: Hochdeutsch you learned--

KUBLER: Yes. Hochdeutsch in Berlin--especially in Berlin.

SMITH: And then what other languages do you know?

KUBLER: Spanish. Portuguese, less well. And that's it.

SMITH: Do you know Italian?

KUBLER: I read Italian easily, especially art historical Italian, but colloquial Italian is beyond me.

SMITH: What about Native American languages?

KUBLER: I read Náhuatl with a dictionary.

SMITH: And Maya?

KUBLER: I can work with Maya glyphs, but I've not kept that interest up since 1980.

SMITH: And Quechua? Did you learn any Quechua?

KUBLER: Quechua? Oh, yes, yes. At one point I worked with [Floyd G.] Lounsbury on the relationship with the Quechua and the Aymara.

SMITH: So you could engage in a Quechua conversation?

KUBLER: No, but I could read a text with a dictionary.

SMITH: A transcribed text.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: And what about a Nahua conversation?

KUBLER: Same thing. I couldn't maintain a conversation, but I could read a text.

SMITH: Okay. I just wanted to get that established for the record.

KUBLER: Surely, yes.

SMITH: Really the last question, but it's a big question, is the decision to pursue graduate studies in art history after returning from Germany. You still had a year of undergrad work. This is the time when you met [Henri] Focillon?

KUBLER: Yes. He'd just been appointed. And Aubert, Marcel Aubert. They were both medievalists.

SMITH: Was it Focillon who opened the door for you to make you decide, "Yes, I want a Ph.D. in art history"?

KUBLER: Yes, I think it was Focillon. It was Focillon. Marcel Aubert was around less often. Focillon, I saw much more of Focillon.

REESE: I think that might really be the next opening point.

SMITH: So then it's that final year of undergraduate work where things begin to jell for you.

KUBLER: And that made me want to go to graduate school, and I had the good luck to go to the Institute, which was

never better than it was then. [tape recorder off]

SMITH: Okay, we're back for the second session this afternoon. I noticed that in your writing the word "entrance" takes on a special significance. You talk about the entrance into something affecting the way it plays itself out.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: I wonder if you could talk about that a little bit, particularly in relationship to your entrance into art history as a profession.

KUBLER: I think I first used the word in that sense in The Shape of Time: [Remarks on the History of Things], which I was writing in 1959 and 1960. The expression means the conditions surrounding the beginning may be favorable, unfavorable. That's all. It's a term that I think is used more in English than in French.

SMITH: Well, it naturally made me think of the scenographic aspect.

KUBLER: In that sense it's scenographic. It's a theater term.

SMITH: Well, what about your entrance? Was it a favorable entrance or an unfavorable entrance?

KUBLER: Which entrance?

SMITH: Yours into art history. I mean, in terms of the setting?

KUBLER: It was extraordinarily favorable. I was a second-year graduate student at the Institute, and I was told that Yale wanted me to come back as an instructor. So I got in touch with Everett Meeks, who was then dean, still. Everett Meeks encouraged me to come. So that was the beginning, and I thought that was an extremely favorable entrance.

SMITH: It reads as if a major transformation, a revolution, is taking place at Yale, basically, with the formation of the history of art focus and then the department. What were the factors that were behind Meeks and others in the Yale administration wanting to separate art history from the art practicum?

KUBLER: Well, we're talking about 1938 when Meeks made this offer. There was no history of art department yet. There wouldn't be a history of art department until Henri Focillon was asked by President [Charles] Seymour [Sr.] to draft a project for a department of the history of art, and that was in 1940.

SMITH: Now, Focillon came to Yale in-- Nineteen thirty-four was his first year?

KUBLER: Yes. He began coming every year. He began alternating with Aubert, and then Aubert stopped coming and Focillon came every year. Prior to that Focillon would come every other year and Aubert, likewise, every

other year. They were never here together. But after Aubert stopped coming, Focillon was the only one to come, and he came every year until his death. And it was he who really planned and laid out the itinerary for the administration with respect to a department of the history of art. Before that, it was History of the Arts and Letters.

SMITH: With an art focus as part of a broader focus.

KUBLER: Yes, with an art focus, yes. So my degree was really given in History of the Arts and Letters--my doctorate. The department was in preparation to replace the History of the Arts and Letters.

SMITH: It seems as though Focillon wanted a cadre, or an équipe, of students that were specially trained to implement his idea of art history.

KUBLER: That is right. That is right.

SMITH: Maybe we could go over some of these people. Had you known these people in your undergraduate years?

KUBLER: Oh, yes. Sumner Crosby, Charles Seymour [Jr.], and I were undergraduates together in different classes. Sumner was a little older than I and Charles Seymour a little younger, but we three, together with George [Heard] Hamilton and Carroll Meeks, were the core of the department, as I recall it.

SMITH: Had Seymour or Crosby or any of the others been in

the Elizabethan Club?

KUBLER: I think so. Seymour certainly. Crosby certainly. Although I may be wrong. I don't know if Carroll Meeks had been a member of the Elizabethan Club. I may be overplaying the importance of the Elizabethan Club, but I don't think it was important to the department. It never became as important to members of the department as it had been to us as undergraduates.

SMITH: I'm trying to get the chronology of this. You came back from Germany in 1933. You spend '33, '34 completing your senior year.

KUBLER: Right.

SMITH: Was that the year that you had your first courses from Focillon?

KUBLER: I'd been having them before that, before I went to Germany.

SMITH: Oh, so you had course work with Focillon before?

KUBLER: I had a course with Focillon before.

SMITH: Well, let's stop there and trace the classes that you took with Focillon and the development of your personal relationship with him.

KUBLER: Well, I remember that they were in a room that is now my office. It was a rather large classroom. I'm afraid I'm a little vague on the calendar here.

SMITH: Well, that's okay.

KUBLER: I think Focillon began coming before '34. You said '34.

SMITH: Actually, I had noted somewhere that he had started coming in '29, but it seemed like you had a relationship with him starting in '34.

KUBLER: Yes. Aubert was the dominant figure to begin with, alternating with Focillon. It was during those alternating years that I first knew Focillon. When Focillon was coming regularly, I was away at New York University. But he still was coming regularly every year until his death in '43?

SMITH: 'Forty-three. Well, after the fall of France he was permanently at Yale.

KUBLER: Yes, yes.

SMITH: Okay, so you had courses from Focillon as an undergraduate?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Even before you went to Germany. Do you recall the courses that you took with him?

KUBLER: Yes. They were on medieval architecture. He would also lecture on medieval painting. He was a medievalist, which is a surprise to people who are medievalists, who never thought of him as a medievalist. But this was after he had written a book of a general scope called L'An mil--The Year One Thousand. This book

was a very valuable handbook to that period and to the group of efforts that mark the early Middle Ages, and after that book he was known as a medievalist. But it was a surprise to people that he would teach the Middle Ages, as he did.

SMITH: Well, how did he teach these classes? How would you characterize the approach?

KUBLER: Well, he was verbally perfect. He had defective vision that made it difficult for him to consult notes, and, as a matter of fact, he had difficulty seeing the slides. He remembered the slides more than he could see them. And reading for him was difficult. He had to bring the paper very close to his eyes and he needed a strong light. So he tended to memorize what he was going to say and to dispense with reading and talk about the slides from memory. This was all a stunning feat of recall. They were brilliant lectures. Always. Every one of them was brilliant and full of the richest allusions and cross-references. It was verbal instruction at its highest. I've never met anything like it again or heard anything like it again.

SMITH: We talked a little bit about how you organized your classes and a little bit about how that compared to Meeks's class in architecture. How did Focillon organize his lecture courses?

KUBLER: I have very detailed notes on them. They're highly organized, but there are few topics. The topics are entered more deeply than usual, but that's because there are few topics. [laughter] And they are selective of what to him--in the program he set forth--were essential pillars of the edifice he was building. Each lecture was self-contained, but it connected with the other ones.

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KUBLER: The lectures were related in the sense that the members of a building are. You could see the building taking shape, and the building was the whole of medieval architecture.

SMITH: But the whole is a big, big topic. So, I mean, was it French medieval architecture or a particular--?

KUBLER: It was French medieval architecture, but then it was also German events or Italian events or Low Countries events or even Spanish events that were relevant to the growth of the building he was erecting. So it was full of reference to things outside of French architecture. Although he was often criticized for being Francophile.

SMITH: So I would take it that, as in your classes, he would really choose one or two or three buildings, and the whole course would be based on--

KUBLER: Yes. It was not a lavish run-through of everything that is in the manuals of medieval architecture. It was highly selective.

SMITH: Would he integrate things like the Utrecht psalter or the tapestry of Bayeux?

KUBLER: Yes. He would make cross-references to other arts and point out identities, relationships that one

wouldn't find in the literature.

SMITH: So you began taking these undergraduate lecture courses with him. When did you begin to have a personal relationship with him, would you say?

KUBLER: Well, almost from the beginning, because he and his wife [Marguerite Focillon] were very hospitable. They had an apartment in the Hotel Taft, and they entertained the members of the course and one got to see him informally. And he was jovial and welcoming--extraordinarily warm personality.

SMITH: This is a tough question, but what about the papers you wrote for him? Do you remember what one of them or two of them might have been about and the kinds of comments that he gave back to you?

KUBLER: Yes. One was the cimborio vault in Spanish architecture. It's an open vault with a rather odd history, and I wrote a paper for him on that and discussed it with him. And he added to it and helped with it. He would read very carefully. He would supply ample comments and further readings and-- He seemed inexhaustible.

SMITH: In terms of the descriptive detail in these papers-- You would take the vault, and I would presume that you would have to identify the morphology of the vault in some kind of quantifiable form?

KUBLER: Well, he would encourage one to frame it as a

problem: What is the problem here? Mere description is not enough. What is the problem? He always came back to the problem, and if one didn't have a problem, one had to find it. [laughter] So progress with him was from problem to problem, and one had to discover the problems.

REESE: Did he speak English fluently or were the lectures in French?

KUBLER: He always spoke in French. He understood English, but he wouldn't speak it.

REESE: And how did that affect the undergraduate reception of his lectures?

KUBLER: Well, many of them learned French in order to listen to them. [laughter]

SMITH: How many students were in these lecture courses?

KUBLER: Oh, up to fifty. And then he would give public lectures which would be attended by three or four hundred, but always in French.

REESE: Was this very unusual at Yale, in terms of the kind of curriculum, to have--?

KUBLER: No, I don't think so. At that time there were many foreigners coming, and they often lectured in their languages and sometimes with translators. But French was well enough known so he never needed a translator. He could always have an audience and not need a translator.

SMITH: Let's talk about some of the fellow students that

you had with Focillon.

KUBLER: Sumner Crosby and Charles Seymour, George Hamilton, Carroll Meeks, who had been assistant to Dean Meeks but no relationship. But Carroll Meeks did all the dreary work. Dean Meeks, being the dean of everything, including the drama school, didn't read papers. Carroll Meeks read the papers.

SMITH: How many of these people became medievalists?

KUBLER: Well, Crosby and Seymour wrote dissertations on medieval topics. Carroll Meeks eventually wrote a book on railroad stations. I've forgotten what his dissertation was, but he may have had a medieval topic. Anyone writing a dissertation or a thesis with Focillon was likely to write it on a medieval topic.

SMITH: Except for you.

KUBLER: Yes, yes.

REESE: Could you say something about what brought Focillon to Yale? Do you know the prehistory of the president's invitation to him to come up--?

KUBLER: I think it was Dean Meeks's close association with academy life and with the architectural profession in France. It was Dean Meeks's knowledge of the academic situation in Paris that brought him together with Focillon and Aubert. Meeks, I think, was the driving agent. Everett Meeks was the driving agent interesting the

president in opening medieval studies in the history of art and eventually opening a department of the history of art. I may be wrong about this, but I think Meeks and his relations with Charles Seymour, Sr., the president was one of the instruments bringing it about. And at this time Focillon was already influential with President Charles Seymour, whose son was Charles Seymour [Jr.].

SMITH: Perhaps could you compare a course of Focillon's to a course of Aubert's?

KUBLER: They were both very polished performances. Aubert was far dryer, far dryer--describing details in an excessively dry way. With Focillon everything was illuminated from several sides, placed in connection with other things, so that you never had the sense of isolated evidence. Everything was connected in the Focillon presentation. Whereas Aubert's was items of building, but there was never a building there.

SMITH: But if one were to take Focillon, Aubert, and Dean Meeks, how would you compare what the purpose of art history was for each? Why would one take an art history class? Why would one spend time? What would be, to use an American term, the payoff for this effort?

KUBLER: Why did Dean Meeks think it would be important?

SMITH: Yes.

KUBLER: He was a Francophile, and he knew of Aubert and

Focillon through their work in Paris. And at this time Aubert was better known than Focillon. But he knew Focillon, partly through his writings, had a wider audience, much wider than Aubert. The large intellectual public of France knew of Focillon but did not know of Aubert. Aubert was too closely concerned with technical problems. Whereas Focillon was always grappling with cultural problems, problems of cultural direction and cultural composition. So that he was far more interesting to follow than Aubert.

SMITH: For a general person.

KUBLER: Yes. And it was he who had the idea of the department of history of art that would include the whole history of art instead of just a part of it, and all aspects of the history of art. It was a generic conception of the history of art that he presented to the president and which the president endorsed.

REESE: In many ways it sounds as though Meeks was preparing architects to know their prototypes and to know the partis of the plans and Aubert was much more the scientific, archaeological--

KUBLER: Yes. Archaeology, he was the archaeologist.

REESE: Focillon seemed to have almost provided the spiritual thing that you were searching for in certain ways, a critical access on--

SMITH: That brings us to the next kind of scandalous aspect of it, which is his connection to Bergson and the whole mysticism that has surrounded the name of Bergson and the people who were influenced by--

KUBLER: In the circle.

SMITH: In the circle, right. Well, let's discuss that. The degree to which Bergson was a guardian figure for Focillon and Focillon's thought, the degree to which vitalism was functioning within it.

KUBLER: I never had that impression. I knew that Focillon was aware of Bergson, but not influenced--not a disciple and not a follower. He was part of the scene for Focillon, but I don't think Focillon would have acknowledged any debt to Bergson.

SMITH: In his lectures or in his private discussion, did he bring in Saussure and the developments within French linguistics?

KUBLER: He knew of Saussure and he cited him. He probably knew his work well, but I've never discussed Saussure with him.

SMITH: Okay, so you would not see a--

KUBLER: I don't see a link there. I would doubt that Focillon would have known Saussure. Saussure would have been much older.

SMITH: Yes, he would have been, but I don't think-- The

Cours général was not published until after the war, as I recall. It was well known but not available.

KUBLER: But Focillon's thinking was not unlike Saussure's.

SMITH: In what sense?

KUBLER: Well, linguistic. The linguistic system of Saussure is a powerful system, and the system Focillon had devised for instruction in medieval art was like the system of Saussure, being inclusive and fragmentary.

SMITH: Okay, but would you see a parallel between the langue parole distinction in the way he approached architectural art?

KUBLER: I haven't thought of it. No.

SMITH: No? Okay. Or the signified/signifier?

KUBLER: No, I don't think so either, no. I don't remember his talking about signified/signifiance.

REESE: Well, one of the subjects that interests I think everyone about the episode of the Institute of Fine Arts is foreign scholars teaching in America. What do you know about the conditions of Focillon and Aubert's absence from France? First in the early thirties, but then as the thirties progressed, the war came on. Was it a normal continuation of their French art history? Or did their being here in America substantially cause a new kind of art historical thought to be developed?

KUBLER: I think the latter. As to the conditions of

their coming, I think they were encouraged by the government, by the French government. The French government actually subsidized some of these visiting professorships through their various overseas agencies. It was a high honor for both Aubert and Focillon to be in this position at a major university in the USA. So it was an honor for them, and the French probably paid for some of their salaries.

REESE: You'd imagine that the teaching that they did in France and what they did at Yale was very similar.

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: So it carried directly.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: What about the relationships with the students? One often hears that the relations that American students and the professors have is of a very different quality than European students and professors. Do you think there was an adjustment there?

KUBLER: Well, Aubert was never enthusiastically received. Focillon--everybody loved Focillon. That was the difference. How else to put it I don't know.

SMITH: In terms of his discussions, lectures, did the work of [Marc] Bloch or [Lucien] Febvre come up? The Annales people--the people who later became the symbols of Annales.

KUBLER: I knew of them. I knew of the Annales much later, and I think all of that came into focus later than this period of Focillon's, which was a terminal period in Focillon's activities, because he died in New Haven without going back to France.

SMITH: Right. In terms of Focillon's approach to teaching, was there a balance between practical and theoretical training? What was the proportion, shall we say?

KUBLER: He was not at all interested in forming architects. He rather despised architects and preferred students who were not architectural students. I think he probably sensed that the architects didn't know what he was talking about--student architects.

SMITH: So you become a graduate student in '34. At the time you decided to become a graduate student, did you know you were going to pursue art history?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: At that time did art history have already a distinctive identity from history per se?

KUBLER: It did in the minds of many people outside this country, but in this country art history was still a sort of mystery or an unexplained newcomer.

SMITH: So in the History of the Arts and Letters, was the art history component one of several components?

KUBLER: No. History of the Arts and Letters, it was the sort of thing that we were talking about in the morning that [Theodore] Sizer was doing. Sizer was teaching art appreciation.

SMITH: Okay, but you guys wanted to move from art appreciation to actual--

KUBLER: To art history. That was a totally different career and preparation and activity.

REESE: Did Focillon, in fact, impress upon you as students that there was this difference? Did he himself criticize the way it was taught?

KUBLER: Yes, yes. Remember, it was taught in France, too, as appreciation, as gourmandise--gormandizing. He used to use that expression.

SMITH: Was he your graduate adviser?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: It's '34 now. You entered graduate school at Yale. What kind of decisions are you having to make about what you are going to do? Presumably you know you want to get your Ph.D. in art history, so how were you advised as to what the steps should be?

KUBLER: Well, I chose to write about New Mexico. I suggested this to Focillon and told him enough about it, and he approved enthusiastically. He told me, "Proceed."

SMITH: When did you decide on New Mexico? Was this

before or after your studies in New York?

KUBLER: It was before.

SMITH: So '34. Now, why did you chose New Mexico?

KUBLER: Partly because of the wish to test art historical principles on an unlikely subject of a very plain, simple, rustic, provincial character. And Focillon approved enthusiastically.

REESE: When did you first discover New Mexico?

KUBLER: Traveling there. Going out there. I made a trip to see the scene in '34 and came back realizing that there was a lot to do worth doing.

SMITH: You went to the *penitente* country then?

KUBLER: Yes. I went up and down the river to a number of pueblos. I went with a classmate [Edmond G. Thomas], who became a medical man, and I was convinced that I could make a presentable master's thesis out of this.

SMITH: Your initial goal was simply to do a master's thesis?

KUBLER: Then I rewrote it and submitted it as a doctorate. I always had Focillon's approval.

SMITH: Now, of course he's a medievalist. You're dealing with architecture that's considerably post-medieval.

KUBLER: Post-medieval. But medieval in a sense.

[laughter]

SMITH: Spiritually medieval, whatever that means.

KUBLER: Medieval survivals.

SMITH: Okay.

KUBLER: Which was a topic that interested Focillon, medieval survivals.

REESE: Do you have specific recollections of New Mexico from that period, of the artistic environment?

KUBLER: Yes. The coherence of it and--

REESE: What kind of things would one have read about New Mexican architecture or New Mexico at that point in time that would have helped you?

KUBLER: Well, there were the documents. It's very well documented. There are a lot of documents you can read, yards of documents.

REESE: I'm actually thinking before the first trip that would, you know, animate you to take this trip to New Mexico.

KUBLER: I remember being much moved by Archibald MacLeish's poem "Newfound Land." Archibald MacLeish decided with the Great Depression that he had better come home from his vagabondage in Paris. And coming home he wrote "Newfound Land," the joys and merits of returning to one's land. At the same time it was becoming difficult to go to Europe.

SMITH: From a financial point of view? I mean, in '34 we're still several years away from the war.

KUBLER: Still open, yes. But I had the feeling that I didn't want to spend my scholarly labors away from this country. I wanted a topic in this country. So that's what drove me to New Mexico.

SMITH: Of course, how did Focillon feel about that? I mean, New Mexico aside, but just the idea of doing work in this country.

KUBLER: He approved it.

SMITH: Do you think this was something he encouraged amongst the other students as well? They should look where they were?

KUBLER: I don't know of anyone who was so undisciplined as I--leaving Romanesque and Gothic, where there is so much to do. [laughter] But Focillon encouraged me. He saw the value of it instantly.

REESE: But it is very interesting this thread, which I had not heard before really. The _cimborio_, working on this Spanish material with Focillon, later the Escorial with Panofsky, the trip to the Caribbean. I mean, some of that you felt is a very early--

KUBLER: Yes. I liked the Latino atmosphere--the Spanish-speaking atmosphere.

SMITH: Okay, you went to NYU [New York University] in '36. Is that correct?

KUBLER: 'Thirty-six? Yes.

SMITH: So you had two years of graduate studies at Yale.

KUBLER: No, no.

SMITH: No?

KUBLER: 'Thirty-four. I took my bachelor's degree in '34 and went to NYU. Or did I do two years of graduate school here? Perhaps I did, in order to benefit from Focillon. Yes, until '36. In '36 I went to New York and stayed there until I was called back to New Haven as instructor. See, I was two years in New York.

SMITH: Okay, so the first two years of graduate work are basically here at Yale under Focillon's direction?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: He was not here all the time. Were there other professors that you were working with?

KUBLER: Yes. I'm trying to remember who they were. I was more or less on my own.

SMITH: Who was on your committee, and how did they get there?

KUBLER: For the master's degree I don't think there was a committee. No, I stayed to get the master's degree. I stayed in New Haven, and I'm a little vague about what I did. I worked a lot with Focillon.

SMITH: You worked a lot with Focillon. And whoever else you worked with, the fact that they fade into insignificance is pretty important.

KUBLER: Yes. I really don't remember whom else I worked with.

REESE: Was Lane Faison a colleague or--?

KUBLER: Lane Faison was. He came here from Williams [College]. He was assistant to Focillon and a very good assistant and a very kindly one. I was on good terms with Lane Faison.

REESE: Was he senior to you?

KUBLER: Yes. Older and already established. His field was more in France than in anything else.

REESE: Did either Sumner Crosby or George Hamilton, who were both one or two years ahead of you, give classes while you were in this master's program?

KUBLER: No. I don't think so. They joined the department after its foundation.

SMITH: Well, on the subject of fellow students, George Heard Hamilton--

KUBLER: George Hamilton, yes.

SMITH: Was he already interested in Marcel Duchamp at this time?

KUBLER: I think so. I think so.

SMITH: Was this something that Focillon encouraged?

KUBLER: Oh, most certainly.

SMITH: So as a medievalist, his perspective was quite wide.

KUBLER: Oh, yes. He was open to the whole domain.

SMITH: Were you interested in Duchamp yourself?

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: I'm just curious how you might have interpreted Hamilton's enthusiasm for Duchamp.

KUBLER: I didn't criticize it. But I wouldn't have gone to the twentieth century.

REESE: As a group, was there a sense at all of a kind of competition for the master's affection? Because all of you were working very closely together right where the medieval field would be like the first.

KUBLER: Yes. That was the first area in view. That was the prime area where we were trained.

REESE: But I was thinking as graduate students together. You all were very close friends and--

KUBLER: Yes, yes. We saw each other regularly and got along well--no rivalries.

REESE: Did the kind of institution you had with the people from the Harkness Hoot continue at all in the seminar or with Focillon?

KUBLER: No, no. Oh, no. Not at all. Not at all. There was nothing like it in graduate school. Graduate school is very lonely.

SMITH: Were there women in the graduate program?

KUBLER: Yes. Women in the department of painting since

the Civil War.

SMITH: But what about in the History of the Arts and Letters program.

KUBLER: Yes. We had women in the graduate school. History of the Arts and Letters was in the graduate school.

SMITH: Were these women who went on to make a career for themselves?

KUBLER: They were very able women students, yes.

SMITH: What about nonwhites in the school at this time?

KUBLER: Let me see. I don't remember blacks. I don't remember an Asiatic. They were rarities.

SMITH: The question of anti-Semitism is something that's brought up all the time. Were you aware of there being an anti-Semitic tradition at Yale?

KUBLER: I was not. I was not and I never encountered it. Excepting when I learned, as a freshman, that Mory's, an eating club, was inviting freshmen to become members but they were not inviting Jewish freshmen. So I refused Mory's and never joined. I can't go to Mory's unless I'm invited. [laughter] Which is all right with me, because one doesn't eat very well at Mory's. I was not aware of anti-Semitism at Yale. I was aware of many Jews and I liked many of them, and if they were discriminated against, I couldn't bear it.

SMITH: Getting back to your dissertation-- You said, of course, Focillon insisted on the problem. How did you pose the problem to begin with?

KUBLER: The dissertation?

SMITH: Yes, the dissertation--or the master's thesis, preferably.

KUBLER: Yes. Well, it's the same piece of work, really. The thesis and the dissertation are separated by more fieldwork.

SMITH: Did you change the way you posed the problem from your initial encounter with the subject as you developed it? And if so, how?

KUBLER: As a master's thesis and as a dissertation the organization is the same.

SMITH: The plan for the organization, or the structural plan, how much of that came from you and how much from Focillon? Not the conclusions, but just the method.

KUBLER: Focillon didn't work very much on it. He didn't want to work on it. He just encouraged me to finish it. What differentiates the thesis from the dissertation is a lot more documentation. I got more documents. And it is a rich documentation.

SMITH: Perhaps we could spend just a little bit defining the research methodology for the dissertation.

KUBLER: Well, for one thing there is the problem of

dating. There are the documents, but there are also the timbers. At this time there was this new technology, dendrochronology, dating from tree rings, which was new. So I took borings. For the dissertation, I took borings from the timbers. I had the help of an assistant who was a dendrologist. We made quite a collection of tree-ring borings and got some dates that are in some cases substantiated by documents and in other cases take the place of documents. So that I was able to date more buildings in the first place with dendrochronology.

SMITH: So the first problem was, then, to know where all the buildings fit on a chronological scale.

KUBLER: Yes. Getting them lined up in time and then analyzing the design problems that the churches contained, establishing the problems and deciding the ways in which they were solved. That's part of the originality of the style. And the rather ingenious and original way of fenestrating--putting the windows in--is peculiar to New Mexico. Transverse clerestories all the way across the upper part of the nave. These transverse clerestories are peculiar to New Mexico--you find them nowhere else really. It's, as it were, a transformation from a domed construction to a band of windows. Very simple, very effective.

REESE: Did you find that you had plenty of people here

among your colleagues to talk to about your work? Or was it a very lonely--?

KUBLER: Oh, no. I talked with people. I talked with Carroll Meeks, who was an architect. I could talk to Crosby, who is an archaeologist. Charles Seymour was helpful. Lane Faison was a good adviser, especially about writing.

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SMITH: Let's shift subjects a little bit to the studies with the Institute of Fine Arts [New York University]. Let's start at the beginning, the decision to go there. You had been studying with [Henri] Focillon. Why did you feel you needed to go study with other people?

KUBLER: I wanted to have more experience in the history of art. And the Institute of Fine Arts was where the up-to-date history of art was being received in the persons of refugees. That was the place to go, and they were marvelous instructors. The whole operation was under the direction of Walter Cook, who was a Hispanist. Walter Cook encouraged me to come to New York because of my interest in Spain and New Mexico. It was Walter Cook who was the drillmaster for the refugees and made them write out their lecture notes and get them mimeographed and have them be available as texts. Walter Cook was, in those days, a very driving and powerful personality as director.

REESE: Where did you first meet him?

KUBLER: Oh, dear. Hard to say. I met him--went down and had an interview with him. I'd known his work. I'd read his work.

SMITH: Let's talk about some of the professors whose

courses were of particular importance to you. I guess Walter Cook is a good place to start, but in his capacity as a teacher. He was a Hispanist, so that would--

KUBLER: He was a Hispanist. He was a dry sort, very exact, very detailed and noninspiring.

SMITH: You took courses in Spanish architecture from him?

KUBLER: Yes, I followed one of his courses in Spanish art.

SMITH: Art?

KUBLER: Including architecture. [Erwin] Panofsky was the man I worked with with most enthusiasm. And I wrote a paper for him on the Escorial, translated it and wrote it into a book [Building the Escorial (1982)]. Working with Panofsky was a joy. Very small seminar, everyone doing his own piece, and Panofsky reading his current paper and saying, "Here's the way I do it. Maybe you could learn something from this." Then he would listen to us, our trial papers. Then he would give a trial paper and improve the paper and then improve it again and then submit it finally. So that was the seminar.

SMITH: Was this the special methods class?

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: Did he speak English from the beginning?

KUBLER: Yes. His English was very good. Very good.

SMITH: So you developed your paper on the Escorial. Was

that the only thing you worked on for him?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Why the Escorial and what was the problem for you? And how did it relate to your dissertation?

KUBLER: Well, I was interested in Hispanic matters. The Escorial is one of those world-class buildings, and I wanted to work on a world-class building. I needed it. There are extraordinary aspects to it that I opened up a little bit, which you can see in the book.

SMITH: I don't think we need to spend too much time on the content of a particular work. Those are there to be read.

KUBLER: But it was, in a way, trying to get to the other side and the other extreme of the Hispanic world by going to the center and finding some of the same qualities that I'd been working with in New Mexico.

SMITH: You also did some studies on Cuzco [Peru] at the same time.

KUBLER: That was for UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization].

SMITH: I thought while you were at NYU [New York University], I noted that you had written a paper on colonial Cuzco.

KUBLER: Perhaps I did. Perhaps I did. But later on in the fifties there was a great earthquake in Cuzco, and

UNESCO asked me to go and assess the damages and to supervise, if I could, the clearing of the churches. Then I wrote a report for UNESCO on Cuzco [Cuzco: Reconstruction of the Town and Restoration of Its Monuments (1952)], which I think was 1950 or '51. The earthquake was in '50. That was in '51. Then I went again in '53.

SMITH: Now, on Panofsky, I think we should spend a little more time on how he presented the iconographical method to his students, the kinds of criticisms that he might have given you as a student as you were working through your paper. I think you've written that Panofsky was not as single-minded in iconology as his followers sometimes have made him out to be.

KUBLER: Oh, it was in growth. It was a matter that was growing in his mind, a subject that was growing in his mind constantly. He didn't talk much about his work. He would criticize your reports and make suggestions for improving the research or the writing, but he wouldn't talk much about anything else. It was rather more supervisory of assigned tasks. At that time the Institute was very poorly housed in a building belonging to the Lehman family. The library was in a hotel, which is now quite a good hotel again, but it was rather run-down then--end of the Depression. Panofsky would meet the seminar in

a bar--in the bar of this hotel--for drinks after the session in a seminar room.

SMITH: Now, the relationship with the Metropolitan [Museum of Art] was already in place, wasn't it?

KUBLER: Yes, that was already in place, but the Metropolitan received only the big audiences for the main lectures, the main lectures and lecturers. There were no offices. All the offices had to be in this residence on Fifty-fourth Street, I think. I forget the name of the house. Then in the hotel down on Madison Avenue, where the Institute had the mezzanine area for classrooms and slides, a slide room-- Slides and classrooms were there, so the classes met in the hotel.

REESE: Did you notice any qualitative differences between the kind of students you met at the Institute classes and those you had known at Yale [University]?

KUBLER: They were the same sort of people, yes. They knew they wanted to be art historians and they were very able--very, very well chosen. Phyllis [Williams] Lehmann, who married [Karl] Lehmann-Hartleben, with whom I studied for a while, was one of them. She's still an active classical scholar.

SMITH: What kind of professional ambitions did you personally and did the other students have? Did you assume that you would become professors at universities

around the country?

KUBLER: I think so. I think so. Professors or museum people. I never really wanted to be a museum person. I've always wanted to teach rather than be in a museum.

SMITH: And you believed that was realistic at the time?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Was it because of expansion that you could see taking place?

KUBLER: Yes. The scene was opening. Actually, I was offered a post at Yale in '38.

SMITH: Right.

KUBLER: After two years at NYU.

SMITH: That we'll get into next time, I think.

REESE: What was the attitude at NYU, let's say Panofsky in particular, towards the training you had received at Yale from Focillon?

KUBLER: Well, they were never contemptuous of it, but they didn't think that highly of Focillon.

SMITH: Why is that?

KUBLER: Because he was perhaps too much of a litterateur for them, having had such a variegated career in all fields of literature and coming to rest in the history of art only fairly late. I think they regarded him as a maverick.

SMITH: But what about La Vie des formes? Did you discuss

that at all?

KUBLER: I don't think the hard school of historians of art care for it. It's too literary.

SMITH: You had Walter Cook, who gave you some grounding in Hispanic architecture and art history. What about Herbert Spinden and archaeology? How did he influence your later work?

KUBLER: Well, he was a lecturer at the Institute, coming over from Brooklyn Museum, and he would lecture in one of the lecture halls of the Metropolitan. The lecture series of the Institute was open to the adult public. Middle-aged and retired citizens of New York could pay a fee and come and listen to the lectures. And Spinden would have one hundred people come to his lectures on Mesoamerican archaeology, which he took very seriously and in which he presented his own researches. At that time he still was very much in his head. Later on he fell apart quite a lot, but at that time he was very much worth listening to.

SMITH: Were you interested in Mesoamerican cultural artifacts at that point? Did you know that you were going to do work in that?

KUBLER: Yes. I wanted to know more, and Spinden was at hand and I started with him.

SMITH: Did you feel that it was necessary that in order to do your dissertation you had to have a sense of the

Native American background?

KUBLER: No. I didn't do it for that purpose. But I did want to bring this archaeology into the scope of the history of art, and as firmly as classical archaeology is placed in the history of art. I wanted to do that with American antiquity, which covers the same time spans, more or less.

REESE: Did Spinden give seminars as well?

KUBLER: No, he didn't give a seminar. He only did these public lectures.

REESE: Did you write papers for him?

KUBLER: I wrote a paper for him, yes.

SMITH: On what? What was the topic?

KUBLER: Mexican calendar. A topic in Mexican calendar--a problem.

SMITH: A problem. Does that then later lead to your work on the Tovar Calendar? Is there a relation, a connection in there?

KUBLER: Yes, they're related.

SMITH: But I take it not directly.

KUBLER: No, but knowledge of the calendar is based on documents like the Tovar Calendar.

REESE: What did the Europeans of the Institute think about Spinden, and perhaps Cook, as scholars? Was there any tension of the Germans versus the Americans?

KUBLER: Yes. They thought Cook was a well-intentioned but ignorant American, and I think they would have had the same opinion of Spinden. But Walter Cook's serious articles are still credible, dealing with the manuscripts and matters of dating. He did good work.

SMITH: Let's pursue that a little bit more, because it seems there might be something to their critique that goes beyond methodology. That there might be a philosophical underpinning, or an epistemological underpinning, that maybe would come out in the kinds of things that they might say to you in terms of your papers. I mean, they were critical of Focillon, they were critical of Cook, they were critical of Spinden.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: What is it that's lacking? These people are not precise enough?

KUBLER: Well, at that time Hispanic studies were not really part of the history of art yet. They were outside, and Walter Cook did a great deal to bring them in. American archaeology was outside the art historical fold. Spinden did not succeed very well with bringing American archaeology into the history of art. That is still incomplete. It's still something that is outside the inner circle.

REESE: Although interestingly, you know, Diana Faine's

work on-- Spinden at the Brooklyn Museum was doing this in the field of museum education in a very active way.

KUBLER: Oh, I haven't seen this.

REESE: Not the university.

KUBLER: I know Diana Faine, and her book is out.

REESE: No, it was actually the exhibition about Spinden's collections at the Brooklyn Museum, which were dismantled. So he was working in academic art history, but also within this very popular museum education, actually, which was aimed at a different kind of audience.

SMITH: Your explanation is that they simply didn't know enough to be able to judge--

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: They couldn't judge Cook's work and they couldn't judge Spinden's work because they didn't know the fields.

KUBLER: No, no, no. It was outside the known world.

SMITH: I guess what I am interested in is, say, German idealistic or Neoplatonist philosophy--say Panofsky's interest in [Ernst] Cassirer and symbolic form--to what degree that acted as a screen that caused them to dismiss these other people's work and to define the art historical discipline in a very particular kind of way.

KUBLER: Well, in this country, the closely guarded boundary of the history of art was the work of the departments in the universities. What they could teach--

what they were trained to teach--and that was it. They were unwilling to break it open so that there would be more and more competition in the departments among fields. And that's still true. It's difficult to shoehorn pre-Columbian studies into a curriculum that is already full. Bringing in a stranger to a family, to a family who are at home with each other.

SMITH: It seems to me you just hire a pre-Columbianist.

REESE: How would you describe what it meant to make a transition from Focillon's lectures to the seminars of Panofsky and Karl Lehmann? Did you feel you improved significantly methodologically into something either very different in kind or more or less sophisticated or a different emphasis?

KUBLER: Well, Panofsky's lecturing style was confusing. It's a question of lecturing style, really.

REESE: Of laying out something very clearly versus peeling the complexity--

KUBLER: Yes. Lehmann-Hartleben was very clear--very clear and a very good lecturer. He lectured about classical archaeology with great skill. And Panofsky never riveted an audience to his words as Edgar Wind did. Edgar Wind was a much better speaker, but Edgar Wind would turn the lights off and there would be no lights. [laughter] And he would not read his lecture. He would

speak it.

SMITH: This suggests there's a whole other aspect of the art historian, which is the art historian as performer.

KUBLER: Yes, exactly. That's important.

SMITH: Not only for the students, but for the upper-middle-class audiences that might come to a museum lecture.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: That one's reputation, to some degree, also can depend on your performance skills, your ability to put slides together in a fascinating way and then say something that might be scintillating. Brilliant but not necessarily too profound.

KUBLER: Oh, it exists very much in every department. There's always a star. There's always a star who lectures a lot. Then there are the drones who don't lecture a lot. [laughter]

REESE: There has been some discussion about Panofsky's statement in The Meaning of the Visual Arts about the movement to America representing a new beginning for him where he could learn to lecture to students and deal with administration as something that was useful knowledge. Some people have said that they feel that that comment represents really almost an ironic statement about the passing of the privileged position he had in Germany. And

others say, no, they felt he really did embrace the changes that teaching within an American university brought forward. Do you have any--?

KUBLER: Well, I've read Panofsky's works before he came to America. They are very dense and recondite, very dense and very recondite. But his American lectures are infinitely better as lectures. He learned how to reach a public. In Germany he was all tied up with rivals and colleagues and had no public. He wasn't speaking to any public.

SMITH: Now, when we talk about reaching a public, it makes me think about Donald Preziosi's line of reasoning that one of the functions of the art historian is to construct a tradition, an understanding of Western civilization or whatever national tradition that you're dealing with, and sell it to a public. That you basically are establishing a normative ideological perspective. How do you feel about that? That the art historian is participating in the construction of a normative ideology.

KUBLER: Oh, I don't think it should have any part in it, no. [laughter] I think he should communicate discovery and share discovery.

SMITH: Expansion, then.

KUBLER: Yes. Expansion. Expansion of the field rather than overcultivating it. [laughter]

SMITH: Given the particular things that you've worked on, that certainly fits--to bring New Mexico and Mexican and Spanish art into the mainstream.

KUBLER: The Escorial. The Escorial was much neglected.

REESE: Did you sense, though, in Panofsky something you might call elitist in his very early seminars at the Institute? His relationship with students and with their knowledge, that they were in some way less than the German students he had taught?

KUBLER: No. I thought in the seminar I had with him that he was very much trying to treat us as colleagues and to show us how to work through showing us how he worked. That was his manner. And I found it very satisfying.

SMITH: Was there therefore, then, say, a lot of discussion of Cassirer and that intellectual background?

KUBLER: No. The discussions were of the papers being presented.

SMITH: So he would not fall back upon a more fundamental philosophical position?

KUBLER: No, he wasn't talking about that at all. He wasn't in that mode--the Hamburg mode--at all. But it was his teaching mode. And his teaching mode was to teach by telling how he had done it.

REESE: What was the political edge to discussions at the Institute in light of events in Europe and in light of the

fact that they were émigrés? Was that acknowledged and discussed ever?

KUBLER: It was never mentioned--it never came up. No one talked about it. It was just not an interesting topic.

SMITH: When did you decide that there was going to be a war with Germany? When did you feel that it had become part of your future?

KUBLER: Well, I probably was as sure of it as I ever had been when I was in Munich in January of '33.

SMITH: Really? That early?

KUBLER: I knew then that this had to end.

SMITH: And it would end with another world war.

KUBLER: And there would probably be a war. He was leading his people to war.

REESE: You had once mentioned to me staying in Berlin in a house which was filled with German veterans.

KUBLER: Oh, yes, officers, German officers. It was a _pension_, yes. And they were talking, yes. That was '31, summer of '31. That was two years before Hitler, before Hitler's chancellorhood. But they were talking Junker. It was Junker talk. It wasn't social democratic.

SMITH: We sometimes forget that before Hitler we had the Julius Streicher dictatorship. The democracy had faded away over several years before Hitler.

KUBLER: Yes. No, these were speculations about who was

going to take over when [Paul von] Hindenburg left and so on.

SMITH: Something that struck me is that your work and the work of your generation has a strong empiricist foundation, that you want to collect your data before you begin to make conclusions. And yet your teachers--and perhaps this is just the spin that's been put on them by the current generation--are people who work from a priori theoretical constructs. I mean, certainly that's how Panofsky is discussed nowadays and Focillon. How do you account for that apparent disjunction between the theoretical construct and attention to empirical detail? Is it a disjunction?

KUBLER: Well, I think it's a necessary cooperation of both an empirical foundation and its opposite. But without verification, why open your mouth.

SMITH: Well, I mean, the famous thing that [Georg] Lukacs said--some facts were raised to counter an argument that he had been making--was, "The facts be damned. What I'm saying has to be true because it's logically necessary."

KUBLER: Yes. Logic and fact are different.

SMITH: And certainly that's a strong aspect of--

KUBLER: It's a restatement that facts and logic must be brought together.

SMITH: Right. But to get back to Panofsky, if one reads about Panofsky nowadays, it really does stress his

indebtedness to Cassirer and a working out of a philosophical program in which the facts seem somewhat incidental. Is that how it manifested itself in the classroom?

KUBLER: No. In the classroom he was always highly factual and he lost all the speculative concern that marks the Hamburg papers.

SMITH: What about Focillon? In some ways you have a similar disjunction in Focillon between a broader philosophical outlook and attention to detail.

KUBLER: Well, in Focillon there is something which one might call journalistic. He is very much concerned for effect and for reaching the public, and his rhetoric betrays it. His rhetoric, his very superior rhetoric, brings him very close to his public. But what he has to say is substantial and solid, and that he has not maintained a large following is perhaps the loss of the people who might have benefited by knowing him. I think his work is less and less read. Am I wrong?

REESE: La Vie des formes has just gone into a new edition, as you know, with Zone Books. Did they not republish your translation just recently?

KUBLER: No, I haven't seen it.

REESE: Of La Vie des formes?

KUBLER: No. Is there any commentary?

REESE: No, no. Straight reprint.

KUBLER: Just a reprint, yes. Then the book is still in demand.

REESE: I think what's interesting to me, though, is that we have been talking about rhetorical forms--the lecture, the seminar, and in fact among lectures, public lectures, university lectures. And we no longer have anything remaining but the written text, scholarly work, right?

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: But you're recalling the kind of lost pieces that were so important in building the discipline. And therefore we don't know what a Panofsky lecture was, because it's not recorded.

KUBLER: A Panofsky lecture was in no measure as gripping as a lecture by Wind. Panofsky admired Wind in Hamburg, but in America I think he came to despise him for that dramatic capture of the public that Wind cultivated in America but apparently he didn't have it in Hamburg.

REESE: And of course that brings [Aby] Warburg to mind.

KUBLER: Yes, Warburg.

REESE: Another figure out of the scene now.

KUBLER: Yes. That's the trio. Yes, the Hamburg trio.

SMITH: Was there discussion of Warburg at NYU, at the Institute?

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: Were you familiar with what was going on at the Courtauld [Institute]?

KUBLER: Yes. And I was later invited to lecture at the Courtauld under the unfortunate director.

SMITH: Oh, Blunt? Anthony Blunt?

KUBLER: Anthony Blunt.

SMITH: Did you have any encounters or contact with Julius Held?

KUBLER: Yes. I heard his lectures when I was a student at the Institute and admired them and admired him. He was a man of marvelously even temper. He was everybody's friend.

SMITH: What about Richard Krautheimer?

KUBLER: Krautheimer was more thorny.

SMITH: What do you mean by that?

KUBLER: Oh, one had to approach him properly.

SMITH: Did you have reason to approach him?

KUBLER: I heard his lectures. I didn't follow his courses. I never wrote a paper for him. I was always struck by his thorny, protective manner.

REESE: Could you say something about his lectures that you heard and about the kind of method--?

KUBLER: Oh, I always admired him. I thought his lectures were marvelous.

REESE: Written out or--?

KUBLER: They were written out, as I remember. Krautheimer was always worth the time. But difficult to deal with personally.

SMITH: I take it your criteria are a balance between attention to detail and the ability to draw out more general conclusions about the particular culture. So, interpolating from what you said about Focillon--

KUBLER: Yes. And I think it is implicit in what I said about empiric foundations and logical construction.

SMITH: What was the state of Latin American studies when you started out?

KUBLER: In this country?

SMITH: Yes, in this country.

KUBLER: They were very confined to extremely technical historical papers in _Hispanic American Historical Review_. Detailed papers about limited questions and no sense of problem. One wondered why it had been written, excepting that the man had access to the archive and things of that sort. [laughter] Latin American studies consisted of a lot of routine operations. Nothing very stimulating in them, excepting when Latin Americans were doing it. Then they went philosophical and became readable. But North American Latin Americanists were the dreariest bunch. [laughter]

TAPE NUMBER: III, SIDE TWO

MARCH 27, 1991

SMITH: What kind of contact did you have with Meyer Schapiro and the Partisan Review developments in the field of art criticism?

KUBLER: With both, practically no acquaintance.

SMITH: So you didn't hear lectures by Schapiro at that time?

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: His work was not discussed particularly?

KUBLER: Not in my hearing. He was at Columbia [University] then.

SMITH: Though I think he was already beginning to establish himself as a voice.

KUBLER: Yes. I've disagreed with him radically in print. So that's the radical part.

SMITH: Yeah. [laughter]

TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE ONE

MARCH 28, 1991

SMITH: I was noticing in reviewing my notes that at Yale [University], in the residence hall that you lived in, you had maid service. It seemed like a rather high, fine standard of living. Was that normal for undergraduate life at Yale at the time?

KUBLER: Yes, it was. It was. There was also janitor service and firewood delivery. And the rooms had fireplaces, and the dining tables in the dining halls, in the commons, had linen and maid service. [laughter]

SMITH: How long did that kind of life-style continue?

KUBLER: It ran through the Depression and was discontinued only after the colleges were in operation, around 1940.

SMITH: Then when the college system was implemented, in 1934, you went to live in Jonathan Edwards College.

KUBLER: Yes. At the invitation of the master.

SMITH: What was the organizing focus of Jonathan Edwards College?

KUBLER: At that time it was musical, and it's always remained musical. It was also literary, and it was unlike the other colleges in not being particularly sporting. Later on it was more and more a center for premedical

students because it's closest to the medical school. And, actually, the present master is a professor of surgery, who is a very competent master.

SMITH: Now, after you graduated, you continued to live at Jonathan Edwards, I understand, for a while. Is that correct?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: As a graduate?

KUBLER: On the invitation of the master I had a suite. It was very pleasant there, and I stayed there until I went to New York.

SMITH: Then when you returned to Yale in '38, did you continue to live on campus at that point?

KUBLER: No. We were then married in '37, and we broke up that household in Manhattan and moved out here to Mill Rock to a house on the hill.

SMITH: I noticed that in your later article on Focillon ["The Teaching of Henri Focillon"], you mention that your dissertation topic grew out of Focillon's interest in folk art.

KUBLER: That's right. That's right. He had a very early connection with Romania. The Romanian government invited him to Romania. He made various visits and actually had a hand in organizing an international congress of folk art in the thirties, so that he was one of the first figures

in this. So you can see how his hospitality to my topic came out of his own interests.

SMITH: Was he knowledgeable about the santo tradition in New Mexico?

KUBLER: No. It was a surprise to him, and he recognized its affinity with parallel European appearances, and in Romania.

SMITH: What about in terms of his lectures? Would he integrate folk art with high art if it was appropriate, given the points he was making?

KUBLER: Yes. He was using folk art constantly for reference, a reference point for one reason or another.

SMITH: I had planned on talking a little bit later about Mexican folk art and that. But in terms of how he defined folk art, was he concerned about regularized traditions or would he accept individualized statements as folk expressions?

KUBLER: Both. Both traditions and individual expressions. He made a trip to Mexico, and I don't know how they got it back, but he brought us that gift from Mexico. [gestures toward piece of folk art]

SMITH: Then I believe that it was for [Erwin] Panofsky that you wrote your Etruscan paper ["Some Etruscan Versions of Corinthian Ceramics"]. Is that correct? Or was it for Karl Lehmann?

KUBLER: For Lehmann, yes.

SMITH: When Tom [Reese] and I were talking about that last night, it struck us that there's a curious parallel. In a class on classical archaeology, you were writing about what could be called commercial wares.

KUBLER: Yes, Corinthian. Proto-Corinthian.

SMITH: Proto-Corinthian, right. This provincial aspect. And then on your dissertation you chose another provincial area where a high art tradition is being reflected and inflected.

KUBLER: That's a good word: inflected. Is it conjugated?

SMITH: Is there an affinity you had at that time or continued to have for provincial expressions?

KUBLER: Yes. At that time and still today, Americans are so wrapped up in their own affairs that they're really very provincial. They remain provincial--we remain provincial. We remain provincial on a continental scale. The provincial continent. [laughter]

REESE: Was the paper your own idea, and how did Lehmann react to the choice of the subject?

KUBLER: He was very pleased with it and recommended it for publication in Marsyas, which was the house organ of the Institute of Fine Arts [New York University].

REESE: But it was a topic really that you--

KUBLER: It's a topic that I picked. I picked, yes. It had been treated archaeologically but not art historically.

SMITH: There is a strategic choice between deciding to write about the heights and finding something new to say or choosing an underworked area and developing it to the same level of sophistication as things that have been written about extensively. Were there particular reasons, in terms of figuring out how you were going to place yourself in a career, for the kinds of choices that you seem to have made, in terms of going to underdeveloped topics that had not been extensively written about?

KUBLER: Well, I think that's intrinsic to graduate study--finding an area to be identified with and doing so. I think everybody probably goes through those operations but perhaps on a different axis.

SMITH: But, still, some people choose to write on Palladio and Michelangelo or the French impressionists. And then other people decide to go in other directions. In part, I'm wondering what is the affinity for you. Is there greater freedom in terms of what you can say, or is it the challenge of bringing this obscure material into--?

KUBLER: Well, it's an advantage that no one else is there. But the challenge is testing art historical method with very simple conditions, away from the metropolis,

away from the grand traditions of the history of art.

SMITH: But isn't there also the disadvantage that people tend to think that because your topic is not important, therefore what you write is not important?

KUBLER: That's right. There aren't many readers. And others were very much concerned. I was a youngster in it, but there was this group of Europeans at Focillon's international conference, of which the papers were published. But I had been working for years in this direction of historicizing what seemed nonhistorical material.

SMITH: The other aspect that I wanted to discuss gets into your second book [Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century (1948)], of course, but in the thirties--twenties and thirties--there had been a tremendous increase in popular interest in Mexico. There was Stuart Chase's book [Mexico], Anita Brenner's book [Idols behind Altars: The Story of the Mexican Spirit]. The Mexican muralists had really tremendous popularity in the United States. I think at that time Alexander Girard had started his folk art collection. To what degree were you plugged into those kinds of interests and things?

KUBLER: Well, I didn't plug into the Works Progress Administration or any of those relief activities of the government. I didn't have anything to do with those. I

remained an academic spectator of what they were doing. But the whole U.S. engoûment with Mexico was very interesting and was correctly placed around 1920 to '40. And then it transformed into a commercial hype about traveling to Mexico and group activities. [laughter]

SMITH: In terms of your choice of topic, or the specialization, I'm sure as a graduate adviser you have had not only to consider the interests of your students, but where they can fit in terms of the academic market.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: And I was wondering, to what degree, when Focillon was advising you and the other students, was he considering the development of the academic market or even the development of specialties within the Department of Art History that you probably already at that point were thinking about? What was it? [Sumner] Crosby was the medievalist.

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: Who completed his Ph.D. in '37.

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: And then Charles Seymour [Jr.] completed his in '38.

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: Just at the moment you were coming back from the Institute.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: And then [George Heard] Hamilton becomes the modernist.

KUBLER: Hamilton was the modernist, yes.

SMITH: So was there an element of that, in terms of his saying, "You should be the Hispanist"?

KUBLER: Well, yes, he had a very clear idea of what he envisaged the department as being and becoming, and he was backed all the way by President [Charles] Seymour [Sr.]. So that Focillon made the department at the behest of the president.

SMITH: Or vice versa.

KUBLER: Yes. But there was a good transmitter in Charles Seymour [Jr.], who was very much part of the plan and remained one of the central figures until he died.

SMITH: But the decision to become a Hispanist-- Would that be correct? Would you be a Hispanist or a Latin Americanist?

KUBLER: Well, a Hispanist--in principle--can be a Latin Americanist. It's very often the case, wouldn't you say?

REESE: Yes.

KUBLER: I didn't feel that I was being instructed to do anything that I hadn't considered before. I seemed to fit into the design for the department from the beginning.

REESE: Do you remember the courses that you gave in '38

and '39 when you first came to Yale?

KUBLER: Yes. I remember very distinctly that I began a course in pre-Columbian art, and with quite a number of students. My other assignment was a section of the general introductory course to the history of art. And not in that year, but during the forties, I became director of graduate study.

SMITH: In terms of the pre-Columbian course, you would have had [Herbert] Spinden's courses--preparation at NYU [New York University]--but were there other sources that you drew upon for constructing your course outline?

KUBLER: Oh, yes. All the literature I could find. There was a lot already. Archaeological literature going back into the eighteenth century and farther, and so on. There was a rich literature to work with.

SMITH: But not specifically art historical.

KUBLER: Not art historical, no. This all had to be given art historical dress, art historical coordinates.

[laughter]

SMITH: How well understood was the iconographical tradition of pre-Columbian art at that time?

KUBLER: That was a subject that was most-- Well, one of the most common kinds of essays. The lecture would be on the meaning of this rather repellent part at some times.

[laughter]

REESE: I think it's interesting that in the late thirties and early forties George Vaillant was coming to Yale--

KUBLER: Yes, that's right.

REESE: 'Thirty-seven, '38 that Wendell Bennett came to teach here. John Rowe was an undergraduate here with his B.A. in 1940. Charles Gibson got his degree in 1941. So it's clear that in those two or three years' time when you began, there was a great deal of nascent activity within that realm.

KUBLER: Yes, that's right. There was enough of a collegial group in various cities on the East Coast to bring together.

SMITH: At that time--and I'm talking really specifically at that time--in order to solve some of the problems, you had to develop these interdisciplinary connections. Was there felt to be a tension between the art historical requirements and the anthropological?

KUBLER: Yes. That was intrinsic, and the anthropologists felt a rivalry--a nascent rivalry from the art historians--which they didn't care for. The general attitude of the anthropologist still remains rather hostile to art historical ventures. They're very tractable as individuals, but as members of the anthropological profession they feel a threat from the humanistic approach, which is still very strong.

SMITH: Though there is a humanistic side to anthropology. It's not simply a social science.

KUBLER: Yes. [Alfred] Kroeber notably.

SMITH: Well, let's discuss some of the individual relations. I thought particularly that we should discuss Kroeber, since he seems to be another important building block in the development of your methodology. The first question would be when you became aware of the need to communicate with Kroeber and what you were hoping to get from him initially.

KUBLER: Well, I read his papers and his books. I read everything he wrote, and I found it germane.

SMITH: Now, you were at this time working on the New Mexico religious architecture [The Religious Architecture of New Mexico in the Colonial Period and since the American Occupation (1940)].

KUBLER: Yes. And I was also working on my courses, and Kroeber's work was relevant for me and I studied it closely. I had repeated opportunities to talk with him because he was a close friend of Cornelius Osgood, and Cornelius Osgood was our neighbor in the next house. So that whenever Kroeber came to Yale, or to the East Coast, he would come to Osgood's house. And actually he asked to see me. So I would always be present when he came on a visit or for a lecture, and so on and so on. We exchanged

views, and he was always sympathetic with what I was doing. But there remained in the background this professional concern about an intrusion upon their turf. [laughter]

SMITH: There has developed, actually, quite a literature in the anthropology of art. How would you distinguish between art history and anthropology of art?

KUBLER: Well, the anthropology of art is really about other things than the art historians' concerns.

SMITH: In what sense? How do you see the focus shifting?

KUBLER: Well, the detailed inspection and the detailed study of single objects is contrary to anthropological archaeologists' procedure of finding groupings and resolving the individuality of the object in the group that has been defined by the anthropologist who is an archaeologist. So there is a fundamental antipathy of approach of excessive sympathy for the object on the art historians' part and too little understanding of the object on the anthropologists' part.

REESE: Yesterday, you were describing the teaching at the Institute of Fine Arts. Even in Focillon's lectures, the emphasis was very much on the kind of concrete problem solving and a movement away from theorizing. Nevertheless, you, in early points, seem to have a keen interest not in theorizing per se, but in the kind of

methodological significance that results from these theories. Did Kroeber talk to you generally just about your work, like The Religious Architecture of New Mexico or Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century, or did you talk about larger issues of configurations of cultural growth?

KUBLER: He was always interested in what I was doing. I was always interested in what he was doing until toward the end of his career, when he began to be a world historian and he went rather soft on the edges. His later work I didn't care for at all. But there's a paper of Kroeber with Jane Richardson on costume--on the history of costume over many generations--which is extraordinarily perceptive and precise, and it's a product of Jane Richardson with Kroeber. Jane Richardson, in a way, controlled Kroeber from going world historian. [laughter]

REESE: Did you discuss the organization of Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century with him?

KUBLER: Yes. He was always asking. He would always ask Osgood to ask me to his evenings, and he'd ask about my wife.

SMITH: When did you start working on that book?

KUBLER: Which one?

SMITH: Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century.

KUBLER: I would say about '36. The idea was present

early on.

SMITH: And the structure of the book, how did that develop, if you recall? The decision to begin with what must be from an art historical point of view a rather long prelude before you actually get to the objects themselves.

KUBLER: Well, the core of the book is the conventual buildings: the Franciscan, Dominican, Augustinian buildings of the period, of which the existence was limited by the relationship of mendicant orders to the regular clergy of the episcopate. It was only in the period from the conquest until the 1560s or 1570s that Dominicans had a free hand, and after that they were brought under control by the bishops and by the secular clergy, who replaced the friars with priests, with secular priests, throughout the viceroyalty. Leaving the Franciscans, who were the most numerous, with only the option to go out farther north, farther west, try to repeat the missionary effort of the early sixteenth century. So there is a life to this phenomenon, about sixty, seventy years of the conventual architecture. I also treated related buildings in the book, but the core is conventual.

SMITH: Particularly the long chapters on demography and urbanism.

KUBLER: Yes. That's for studying.

REESE: I think that what is difficult for me to sort out in reading the introductions to The Religious Architecture of New Mexico and Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century is the kind of order in which they were written. I think yesterday we talked about The Religious Architecture of New Mexico coming out of a trip down in the mid-thirties, and yet in that book-- You're publishing significant portions of Religious Architecture of New Mexico in '38 and '39. It's submitted as a dissertation in '40, but it was substantially completed in the late thirties, at the time you were just beginning to teach. Do you recall?

KUBLER: No, most of the writing of Mexican Architecture was done, I'd say, in the forties.

REESE: But The Religious Architecture--

KUBLER: The Religious Architecture of New Mexico was the dissertation, and that was submitted as a dissertation and published as a book in 1940. So that episode was over when the book was published in '40.

SMITH: Do you remember your first trip to Mexico?

KUBLER: Yes. In the thirties, '36, '34.

REESE: Can you tell us something about it?

KUBLER: It was a summer trip, and it wasn't very long. I made some connection with government resources that proved very useful. At that time there was a governmental

service of the monuments, and their archives were extremely useful--plans, photographs, documentation. And I worked in those offices of that ministry.

REESE: Was there a trip with Paul Child to Mexico?

KUBLER: Yes. That was when I met Betty [Elizabeth Bushnell Kubler] in '36. Paul Child fell ill and went back to his school where he was teaching, up here in Haven Old Farms. I stayed out with Betty and her companion, Katie Hamlin, and we went to Oaxaca and saw a lot of Oaxaca and looked at churches. They were very patient about churches. [laughter]

REESE: So that was--

KUBLER: That was '36.

REESE: So that was the beginning of the Mexican Architecture.

KUBLER: That was the beginning of Mexican Architecture. Although I'd been considering it before. Namely as a background for the New Mexico book that I needed to know more about.

REESE: Now, there was another trip with Charles Gibson and Betty in the forties?

KUBLER: Yes. That's right. That's right. We were collecting data, drawing plans. Charles helped me measure and draw and was a very good companion. He became an important historian. He was not interested in the history

of art or in the history of architecture, but he was interested in history--in the history of the Aztec peoples under conquest conditions, which was his great book [The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810]. But that's a general history of Aztec life in the sixteenth century rather than an architectural study. That really was not his interest. He's a historian of the Aztec people during the sixteenth century.

REESE: Now, that trip was, I believe, about 1941. Did you go back to get more and more data as the forties progressed?

KUBLER: Yes. At that time Mexican officials in government services were extremely cooperative and helpful. There was a photographic archive that was ideal that had been accumulated during the thirties and twenties. This archive has disappeared. There's no trace of it left. It must have been sold off. But that archive was indispensable, and they were very generous. They were very generous with making copies from the negatives and letting me have the copies, and then I asked what I owed them and they said, "No hay que preocuparse." [laughter]

SMITH: In your introduction you acknowledge that you had been preceded in this topic by Manuel Toussaint and Robert Ricard.

KUBLER: Yes, Ricard's book was fundamental for me.

SMITH: In what sense?

KUBLER: As a history of the Aztec people. In the same topic Charles Gibson reworked in a very different way. But Ricard's book was very influential with me. I lived with that book--La Conquête spirituelle.

SMITH: You seem with this book to get in hot water with a lot of art historians, or at least there seemed to be criticism. One reviewer didn't like your use of phrases like "aesthetic behavior of these kinds," referring to the objects as forms of behavior.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: And then there was criticism that you did not, in fact, concentrate on individual churches but seemed to spread everything across into typology, so that--

KUBLER: The review of the book.

SMITH: Right.

KUBLER: Yes. Well, those reviewers were either historians or anthropologists. It's a difference of method that is still objectionable to anthropologists.

REESE: Could you say something about the other two scholars working in the United States in this area--John McAndrew and Elizabeth Weismann--who write in the same years.

KUBLER: Elizabeth Wilder, yes, who's later Weismann.

Yes, they were both-- I went on a trip with them one year. I think it was '42. We went into Hidalgo and west to Michoacán. He had a world war vehicle, a big jeep. It was a strenuous trip and we went to a lot of places. McAndrew wanted to write a book on the sixteenth-century churches and found me intruding upon it a bit. I tried not to offend him too much. But in the end he resolved all his studies with a more special subject, which was the open-air chapels that are part of the monastic formula of the mendicant preaching to congregations in the open air, congregations so large that they can't come indoors. Preaching to them from a chapel that is open to the crowds and the courtyard. So he wrote a book on that which is very good--in much more detail than my treatment of the subject. McAndrew always felt that I had taken away the subject from him that he had started, but he was very kind.

REESE: Was he one of the people who wrote this review about the statistical charts that he felt were out of place in a traditional art history book?

KUBLER: Yes. Yes.

REESE: And Elizabeth Wilder?

KUBLER: Well, she was a lover of Mexico. She loved Mexico and she loved everything Mexican. She wrote about it in a very feminine way, a very charming way. Her books

are always rather feminine meditations on the topics. I don't think they had the structure of art historical work that one expects. Her books were appreciative and loving of the subject and charming to read.

REESE: How about the key Mexican figures? Toussaint, Justino Fernández. Did you see them regularly on trips to Mexico?

KUBLER: Always, always. And Toussaint was really the founder of the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, which is a very unusual government body entrusted with the history of art. But they see it as aesthetics, which is more and more palatable as the history of art grows older. But the Mexicans always resolved the history of art into their Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas. And that is open only to Mexican nationals. There are no foreign members. There are foreigners publishing in the Anales, but all members of the Instituto are Mexican citizens.

REESE: Was Toussaint very supportive of your work?

KUBLER: Yes, he was. He always was helpful. Fernández succeeded him as director of the Instituto. Fernández was always helpful--very critical and justly.

REESE: How would you characterize their work, in comparison with your own goals at that?

KUBLER: Well, Toussaint--

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KUBLER: Toussaint was an essayist. He wrote charming essays. He'd go on a trip to a church and then come back and write an essay about it. He wrote essays, but he had no systematic character. As director of the Instituto he had authority and he was very generous with it. He always accepted my presence in a civil manner. Justino Fernández was more of an art historian, more of a systematic thinker. He was more rigorous than Toussaint. He wasn't an essayist. He wrote large volumes and dense volumes and he had method. He had a distinct method. He liked to take one subject-- He wrote a trilogy. One volume was all about the gigantic statue of-- Not Huitzilopochtli but Coatlicue, the snake woman--colossal figure. A book about it. Just that one piece and reviewing all the literature of the past on that one piece, which has been known since the eighteenth century. Then the second book was about colonial art. Then the third one was about Orozco, whom he admired very much. And these books are very solid, very dense books, very scholarly.

REESE: Were there other Mexicans you met in the 1940s whom you were close to?

KUBLER: Yes. There was a young scholar who was very

promising, Toscano--Salvador Toscano. He died young, but his book is an effort at a systematic history of Mexican prehistory, which is quite good but covering too much ground too quickly. Salvador Toscano and others. Justino Fernández's close friend was Edmundo O'Gorman, who was an archivist and one of the most fertile minds in Mexico, an inventive mind and a very good archivist. He wrote a great many historiographical studies, but he wasn't an art historian. The Mexican intellectuals of that period were a fascinating group. I don't know that they have been replaced with others as interesting.

REESE: Did you know them primarily through their work, or were there tertulias and other gatherings?

KUBLER: Both. Both. They gathered a lot.

SMITH: This was a period in Mexico where there was concerted effort to rethink the Mexican national identity. To what degree did that influence their thinking? Was it permeating their work?

KUBLER: Very much. Very much. Edmundo O'Gorman thought a great deal about this question in an extremely intelligent way. So did Justino Fernández, but more as an art historian. Edmundo O'Gorman is more like a Spanish intellectual than the other Mexicans.

SMITH: What do you mean by that?

KUBLER: Well, the wide-ranging studies of people like

[Silvio] Zavala or the cultural historian whose name escapes me now. But there is a Spanish tradition of writing about Spanish culture which is very analytical.

SMITH: In terms of this Mexican national identity, how, as a North American scholar, does your work fit into that?

KUBLER: Well, they accepted it, and I never felt that I was intruding on priorities that were theirs. They were always very welcoming. I never had trouble with Mexican critics.

SMITH: So your work was accepted as something that contributed to a deeper understanding of what they think of the past.

KUBLER: Yes. I think they accepted me. Not as one of them, but as someone they were glad to see.

SMITH: The situation in Mexico was an example of this ongoing interaction of art history and ideological demands, which has its ebbs and flows. How do you view the relationship of ideology and art history? Is it counterproductive?

KUBLER: I think it's an indispensable relationship and that its study is mandatory.

SMITH: Well, the study of ideology is mandatory, but what about ideological motivations?

KUBLER: Well, the historical consideration of ideological drives would be the appropriate method--as historical

subject. Without parti pris.

REESE: The colonial legacy of Mexico was always ideologically problematic.

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: What kind of discussions took place in Mexico and around your work about issues of the value of colonial art as an imperialist, non-Mexican creation?

KUBLER: Toussaint was probably the man who wrote most about it. Manuel Toussaint, the essayist, was respected for this effort and this achievement, precisely this achievement of reassessing the colonial heritage. First as an essayist and secondly as an art historian and as director of the institute he founded, the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas. With long foresight, it may be that the history of art is evolving gradually more and more to a position where aesthetics and aesthetics studies are more central than they had been in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

REESE: Do you remember any serious debates about the leyenda negra and the death and destruction caused by the European conquest really informing your treatment of sixteenth-century Mexican art history?

KUBLER: Well, the attitude of sympathetic consideration of the native populations is intrinsic to Mexican life today. There is no dissent about it. The sympathetic

understanding of the Amerindian tradition that is part of colonial life--so that the hostilities of colonial life and the exploitations of colonial life vanished--ever since the Mexican revolution.

REESE: No, I was thinking largely about the question--raised very frequently as we talk about the encuentro in '92--of "Are these buildings tainted by the enormous demographic sacrifice that takes place with urbanization around their constructions?" Were those issues the ones that were talked about in the forties? You treat it very clearly in your book.

KUBLER: Well, I don't think there was any disagreement between the Mexicans and me. I think they've always accepted my book with sufficient interest to use it, and there is an edition in Spanish published in Mexico, made and published in Mexico. Which could be better. It was printed on rather poor paper. [laughter]

SMITH: I'd like to shift back to Yale if we could and the establishment of the Department of Art History.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: You wrote a little bit about Focillon's lectures in 1940 at the establishment of the department. The group had been really gathered together for the two previous years. Is that correct?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: I don't think we need to talk too much about the content of the lectures because you have your lecture notes. But was there a distinction in what he was saying at this time from what he had been saying six years earlier?

KUBLER: Focillon?

SMITH: Focillon in _La Vie des formes_, or ten years earlier when you first heard him speak. In what direction had his ideas started to evolve?

KUBLER: He had been engaged, when we first knew him, in a big effort to establish himself as a medievalist. One of the results of that episode or part of his life was the book _The Year One Thousand_, which is highly regarded and very different from _La Vie des formes_. It's a serious historical work. _La Vie des formes_ is an essay on aesthetics of a totally different character. So the Focillon we knew was the medievalist. _La Vie des formes_ was in his past, and his current work was always about medieval topics--topics of medieval architecture, topics of medieval life. He was more and more emerging as a medievalist until he died as an exile from France.

SMITH: To what degree did he talk about material culture in the sense that it now is talked about, not necessarily as an aesthetic object but as historical evidence?

KUBLER: I think he would be sympathetic to it, but it

didn't figure importantly in his writing. Although his activity with the international congress of folk art is a token of concern for this subject on which he never really wrote very much. What he wrote was always, when we knew him, in his career as a medievalist, for which he was much respected.

SMITH: In terms of the structure of the department, the organization, how were classes developed and assigned? What were the initial decisions that had to be made in order to establish a coherent program for both undergrads and for graduates?

KUBLER: I don't think there was any firm plan at any time. It was known that so and so could do this, so and so could do that, and how to adapt those elements into a program. And that is the program that Focillon submitted to the president for the establishment of the department with the available people. Then they were gradually replaced by others, but the original form of the department remains pretty visible. Even though people with entirely different kinds of training have come to staff these courses, they go on. Of course there's been a lot of growth in the size of the department, many more, with something like twenty or twenty-five in the organization chart of the department. The courses are more numerous. The graduate students have tripled or

quadrupled, four times as many as the beginning. It's just a bigger operation, but it's substantially the operation that we began with. With a recognizable method and more or less the same distribution of effort.

SMITH: Could you define that recognizable effort? I mean in a couple of sentences?

KUBLER: Visual education--visual education in seeing is intrinsic and basic. And a proper historical method in the use of sources is also part of the instruction.

SMITH: Why would a graduate student at that time choose to go to Yale as opposed to the Institute or to Princeton [University]?

KUBLER: Well, if it were for medieval, the temptation to go to Princeton would be strong. The reputation of Yale wasn't as good as that of Princeton. With Harvard [University]-- The whole effort at Harvard was oriented to the museum world and museum life and museum training. And it still is. They might disagree, but I think they have this tradition of supplying the museums with their directors and curators.

REESE: What about the Institute? What was the appearance of this much larger, more comprehensive graduate education center to art history in this country? And was it immediately sensed that way or was it--?

KUBLER: I think so. It was European. It was a European

structure. A European university structure that had been planted in New York University and at the Metropolitan [Museum of Art], and it continues that way today. It's a graduate research institute of continuing quality.

REESE: You were the only colleague in the department who had been to the Institute.

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: What was the perception of your other colleagues of this other institution?

KUBLER: Well, they accepted it as a research institution for graduate instruction quite unlike anything else. For staffing, other universities looked to the Institute for scholars. If they want scholars, you know, they look first at what is available from the Institute.

SMITH: And secondarily to a place like Yale?

KUBLER: Depending on the quest, what is being looked for.

SMITH: Does that mean that you were charged first to produce teachers and then to produce scholars?

KUBLER: At the Institute?

SMITH: No, at Yale.

KUBLER: At Yale, the mission isn't so clearly defined. It's both an undergraduate responsibility and it's a graduate responsibility, but the two interlock and a lot of graduate students do assistant teaching. And the Yale education is designed that way, to have the graduate

student be a teacher while studying.

REESE: I know that both Crosby and Seymour did their dissertation with Focillon, as you did. Were Carroll Meeks and George Heard Hamilton also dissertation students of Focillon?

KUBLER: I think Carroll was more closely associated with the architectural school. He was trained as an architect and only came after that to be an art historian, and he was always on the edge a bit. He came from architecture, and he had been Dean [Everett] Meeks's assistant--teaching assistant--reading his papers and so on. George Hamilton was the modernist and, as such, much affected by Focillon's teaching.

SMITH: You talked about the question of historical sources. What was the relationship of the new art history department with the Department of History at Yale? Was there much interaction at that time?

KUBLER: There had been. It had been very close when the graduate studies were known as History of the Arts and Letters. That was a temporary arrangement for accommodating graduate studies of art historical character. But that designation and organization were abandoned when the department was founded. The History of the Arts and Letters vanished. My degree and Crosby's degrees were given in History of the Arts and Letters.

The department wasn't yet empowered to give the training for a doctorate.

SMITH: What was your assessment of the history department at that time?

KUBLER: It was regarded as one of the best in the world. It was a huge department.

SMITH: Did you take courses in it, either as a graduate or as an undergrad?

KUBLER: I knew many of the historians, but I didn't take courses, no. Oh, yes, I did. I studied historiography with-- I used his name yesterday, but it fled me now. Oh, Allison, J. M. S. Allison. Allison was one of the leading historians of the time.

REESE: What do you think the historians' view towards art history was during those very early years when Focillon was here and the new department was forming?

KUBLER: Well, there was some hostility to the appearance of a history of art department from the history department and from anthropology, who felt that crumbling of their wall. [laughter]

SMITH: What was your assessment of historiography at that time? I mean, who were historians whose work you appreciated? Who were historians whose work you did not like?

KUBLER: Well, it was a novelty. The history of history

writing. Allison pursued it in the seminar, and it was a valuable seminar. Historiography is very important to art historians--to know how it's done, how it has been done in the past, and what is wanting in the future.

SMITH: Are you familiar with Peter Novick's book _That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question_?

KUBLER: No, I haven't seen it.

SMITH: Where he surveys the history of the historical profession in the United States.

KUBLER: I must look at it. That's just out, isn't it?

SMITH: Well, it came out about two years ago, I think. One of the things that he talks about is the whole question-- I mean, that's the subtitle of the book: "the objectivity question." The need of historians to find an objective base for their work and the shifting ground of that. Since you're not familiar with that book, let me pose the question in another way, which is, how was objectivity posed to you, both by Allison and by Focillon, and perhaps even by Panofsky or the Institute people? Was there concern about objectivity?

KUBLER: Well, yes. It's a behavioral concern of not being too emotional about one's responses to historical evidence. Emotion is to be controlled, but emotion has its place.

SMITH: One of the things that Novick discusses is that at

this time there was tremendous debate amongst American historians over how to define objectivity. With Carl Becker leading a group that said there was really no basis for defining it and then other historians who were attempting to ground objectivity in something that was non-ideological. Were you aware of those kinds of debates?

KUBLER: Yes. And they always resolved into debates about scientific attitude as against the nonscientific attitude and in the validity of the nonscientific attitude. So it would be science against more personal attitudes or viewpoints and their inevitability.

SMITH: But I think one of Becker's arguments--and he was speaking as a well-respected historian--was that the scientific model was at best a metaphor for what was done by historians and actually too often misled people into thinking that they were doing something that was in some fundamental way similar to what biologists or physicists were doing. I think he was arguing that the question of establishing values was central, as opposed to establishing experimental data. In terms of the scientific method for you, how has that functioned in your mind as a model for what you are trying to do?

KUBLER: Well, I've never been a scientist and have none of the tools of the scientist, so that I admire and

understand scientific work, but I'm incapable of producing one.

SMITH: Did you ever think you might be producing something that was "scientific"?

KUBLER: No. I never had that delusion. [laughter] But I do regard myself as an art historian.

REESE: Could you say something about what you might have known or believed to be Charles Seymour, Sr.'s vision for art history within Yale? And maybe something about Charles Seymour, Jr., and his father in the genesis of art history at Yale. Did you know the president personally?

KUBLER: Yes. He was a presidential figure of a man. He looked the president and he was president. His term as president was one of growth for the university and very great changes after [James R.] Angell's regime. I think Charles Seymour, Sr. and Jr., both of them, were willing to accept what Focillon told them he wished they would do. And in a way, the president asked Focillon to prepare a program. Which was done and approved.

REESE: It was clear, I guess, that Charles Jr. would have to go somewhere else, initially. To the National Gallery [of Art], was it?

KUBLER: Well, he wanted to have museum experience, and he had ten years of it and then he came back to Yale.

SMITH: I was thinking maybe we might shift again to

another topic, which is your marriage.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: If you could just describe to us how you met your wife.

KUBLER: Well, it's been a very happy marriage. That's all I can say. [laughter]

SMITH: You mentioned you met--

KUBLER: We have four children, and we're very fortunate that they're such good people.

SMITH: Something that always interested me--I don't think it's really ever discussed enough--is the responsibilities and the roles of a faculty wife.

KUBLER: Yes. Oh, yes.

SMITH: Really, in many ways it has been an unpaid job. How have those worlds changed over the past fifty years we're talking about? Was there an understood code at Yale about what a faculty wife was expected to do?

KUBLER: Well, I think Yale has always been hospitable to appointing women. Women have been appointed to faculty posts ever since the 1850s.

SMITH: But I mean the spouses of professors.

KUBLER: Yes. The spouses of professors sometimes are professors too. Most professors, I would say, most married professors, do not have their wives as professors, but I don't think that faculty wives at Yale are

discontented. They are not notably discontented. They take part in a great many activities of the faculty. Betty never has, but she's always had other things that interested her, the theater, music school, things like that.

REESE: I guess the fact that Yale was a men's school for many years-- Colleges where the life of the fellows of the colleges really was a man's world during a large part of Yale's history.

KUBLER: Very early women were taken into the fellowships of the colleges, but not in great numbers. That may have led to some feelings among those who weren't fellows in colleges. But women were fellows in colleges from the beginning of the colleges.

SMITH: Could you just tell us a little bit about your wife's background and the evolution of her interests?

KUBLER: Well, she always has been a painter, and she studied at Fontainebleau in summer school. She was a Smith [College] student, and she studied history of art at Smith and she painted at Smith. So she's always been a painter and interested in the history of art. Betty's position in New Haven and at Yale has always been easier than that of most women because her family have been here for a long time. She grew up here and the university has always been welcoming to her, which is unlike the lot of

many women coming from outside to New Haven. She was delighted to move with me to New York for two years while I was a student there--and then very distressed to come back to New Haven. New York was a very pleasant place at that time, and we left it with reluctance. But she's taken part in many things in New Haven and is much esteemed.

SMITH: You've mentioned she has musical interests. What have those been?

KUBLER: We go to concerts and we take part in the musical life of the town. And she used to sing in the choir. She sang for years with great pleasure. That was one of her great pleasures.

REESE: And the theater is the key.

KUBLER: Theater is the key activity. Long Wharf Theater, of which she is one of the founders and is the vice president.

SMITH: Was she involved in theater activities before Long Wharf?

KUBLER: Yes. And she has a lot of theater in her.

SMITH: Was she a performer as well as--?

KUBLER: Yes. She's performed.

REESE: I would just follow that up by asking about what it meant with four children to travel so much to do primary research and how that both affected or enriched

your own work.

KUBLER: Oh, she's always been marvelous about it. We took the four children to Peru for a year, and that was beset by many difficulties. But she's very resilient and came through it very well, brought us all through it very well.

REESE: And later you were in Spain--

KUBLER: And later in Spain, yes. We had our youngest [Elena Ann Kubler] with us in Spain when she was small, and Betty taught her to read.

SMITH: How did your children feel about the research trips?

KUBLER: Oh, they enjoyed themselves and learned languages.

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SMITH: If one looks back at when the department is formed in 1940, almost immediately you're hit by World War II, which must have made the circumstances of building a department somewhat difficult.

KUBLER: Oddly enough, it didn't affect the department at all. The men were family men and they weren't drafted. No one was drafted. No one was withdrawn for war reasons. So we had that good fortune to be able to continue through the war.

SMITH: What about students, though? Weren't they--?

KUBLER: Oh, we had lots of students.

SMITH: You did?

KUBLER: Yes. And very good students. Very good students emerged during the time--and large enrollments.

SMITH: Could we discuss some of the courses you developed at this time? We talked a little bit about the pre-Columbian. Maybe if we could continue with that. Was that a lecture course?

KUBLER: That was a lecture course.

SMITH: Was there a seminar course?

KUBLER: There was a seminar for graduate students, yes.

SMITH: Maybe we could take the pre-Columbian first and

discuss the competencies that you expected the students to have mastered at the end of both the undergraduate course and the seminar. What were your expectations of the students and how did you measure them?

KUBLER: Well, I've always asked for written work--choose a topic, choose an object--and directed the research along the necessary channels.

SMITH: Is this for the graduate seminar?

KUBLER: No, this is for the undergraduates. The paper was the main thing, wasn't it, a research paper. And then an examination on recognition, usually, and writing about certain topics, set topics. Customary procedure, nothing novel.

SMITH: In terms of the undergraduate papers, what would you be expecting an undergraduate to demonstrate in the paper? How much originality would you be looking for?

KUBLER: Well, I would be on the alert for large transplants from printed work. [laughter] On the alert, also, for originality, which I often found. Very often undergraduate papers were good enough to be encouraged, for their writers to be encouraged to go farther with the subject and go into it farther, which sometimes happened.

SMITH: The paper would be restricted to a discussion of one object.

KUBLER: Not necessarily. Might be a text. Any sort of

relevant idea would be eligible.

SMITH: The evolution of a form.

KUBLER: Yes. No special control set up for the papers.

REESE: Have you thought about the relationship of your teaching style to [Henri] Focillon's? Were you modeling your--?

KUBLER: Probably, probably. I'm sure I did model my teaching on his.

SMITH: In addition to the pre-Columbian, you taught Introduction to Art.

KUBLER: That was a period during the war when the whole department took part in the introductory course, each according to his abilities. And that's where Vincent Scully was trained. It was quite a taxing thing to prepare lectures and to make them palatable to a general audience. Very good training, very good effort.

REESE: Had Focillon taught only medieval, or had he taught a history of Western art course?

KUBLER: He was a member of a research institute in France. He'd also taught at the Sorbonne. At the Sorbonne, I think he taught general courses. At the institute, he taught professionals.

REESE: But at Yale [University] he did not give a survey class.

KUBLER: No. He would lecture on medieval architecture,

for example. His topics were always medieval.

REESE: As you, as a young department, thought about the content of this general history of Western art, did you sense that there was something unique about what you were doing as opposed to what was done at Harvard [University] or Princeton [University]? That there was a Yale style?

KUBLER: Yes. I think so. I think so, and the style came both from Focillon and [Sumner] Crosby and [Charles] Seymour [Jr.], who were both of them very much concerned with undergraduate teaching, took it seriously. We all did.

SMITH: What other classes did you teach?

KUBLER: Well, I became director of graduate study early on, and so I taught seminars and I worked with a methods course, which you [Reese] may remember.

SMITH: You became director of graduate studies. Did that mean, then, that your undergraduate teaching load was reduced?

KUBLER: Yes. Then I taught the graduate students when there were enough graduates.

SMITH: You've mentioned a historical methods course, and then there would be specific topics that you would develop.

KUBLER: Yes. Especially topics on how early art historians conducted their work, going back to the

Renaissance. This was a training course. They wrote papers.

SMITH: Could we talk a little bit about some of your graduate students in the 1940s? Let me augment that. If you could also include undergrad students that were particularly--

KUBLER: Well, I don't keep very good records, and my memory of students is poor, especially when they were many. We began to have many students during the war. Of that period I have memory of very few outstanding, if any.

REESE: Could I give some names that would--?

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: Jim [James S.] Ackerman.

KUBLER: Jim Ackerman, yes. Yes, of course.

REESE: Do you remember him as a--?

KUBLER: I remember him as a graduate student and a very able one--a very able one and marked for the distinction he has. He was a student with me in the pre-Columbian course.

SMITH: He went on to study at the Institute [of Fine Arts, New York University]. Did you discuss that decision with him at all?

KUBLER: Yes. I think so.

SMITH: Was that a recommendation from you?

KUBLER: Yes. I urged him to.

SMITH: Why would you direct some students to the Institute and not to stay at Yale?

KUBLER: Well, it depended on what they wanted to write about. Jim Ackerman was an architectural historian, and he wanted to write about Renaissance architects. The Institute was the place for him at that time.

SMITH: You have some other names?

REESE: John Rowe.

KUBLER: John Rowe. Well, I don't think I ever taught John Rowe. He was an undergraduate, you see, and I knew of him. His mother [Margaret Talbot Rowe] was on the staff of the [Yale University] Art Gallery. She was curator of textiles. So I knew of John more in that way than in his work. He was in anthropology. He was an anthropologist, and I think he was a graduate student at the time. I don't think he came for any art history. He didn't come to my course.

REESE: Did you know Charles Gibson as an undergraduate?

KUBLER: Charles Gibson I knew as an undergraduate, and he accompanied us on a trip to Mexico, as I said. And he was a great help.

REESE: Was Colin Eisler a student at Yale?

KUBLER: Colin Eisler was also in a course with me, and I've forgotten which one it was. I have a very poor memory for classes. [laughter]

SMITH: You've mentioned Vincent Scully already.

KUBLER: Vincent Scully I knew only when he became a member of the staff.

SMITH: It seems that the Yale pattern is a little different than most. Accepted wisdom in universities is that you should not hire your own graduates. Yet obviously, beginning with the first group of faculty and even continuing beyond that, it seems that some of the expansion has come--

KUBLER: Yes. I think we always try to get the good and willing student to join the faculty. No, we had no policy about that.

SMITH: But I wonder--particularly since there seemed to be such a well-known folk wisdom in academia that students must go out from their home institution--how the Yale art history faculty understood what they were doing and if you realized you were doing something that was different from the norm.

KUBLER: Well, when it was an urgent necessity for someone to go to Paris or down to Los Angeles, let him go. But no holds barred on bringing him back. And we did frequently bring good students back after they had turned elsewhere.

SMITH: What was the caliber of the social relations between the faculty and the students at Yale at this time?

KUBLER: Well, I remember when I was director of graduate

study, I would meet students in this house every week for an evening. Conversation, talk, and refreshments. Just talk about the department, talk about whatever was on their minds. And I did that all during the time I was director of graduate study. I don't think that it's much the custom of Yale faculty to do that. I don't know of other cases of it. The Yale custom is family life, and the university is another life.

SMITH: What about placement of students? Were you involved much in finding teaching positions for your students?

KUBLER: No, never! And I don't think we ever did anything about it, because there were openings and the students found them. We recommended them when requested.

SMITH: What about placing publications by students? Did you--?

KUBLER: We helped them.

SMITH: You did help them. You would--

KUBLER: Give suggestions.

SMITH: --give suggestions. Both getting books published and articles?

KUBLER: Yes. Recommend them to go to the Art Bulletin or to the Journal of the [Society of] Architectural Historians.

SMITH: Would you call up or write editors yourself to

particularly recommend anybody's work?

KUBLER: When work was sent to me, I would always read it. But I never solicited reading a paper for a publisher.

REESE: What were the social and intellectual relationships at Yale across departments? In other words, clearly in the forties you had a fantastic array of linguists, [Bronislaw] Malinowski in anthropology, historians, literary courses. Did one have a natural basis to establish contacts with other faculty members?

KUBLER: One was perfectly free to begin an exchange of views with anybody and go on from there. Sometimes, as in the case of [Cornelius] Osgood next door-- Osgood and I were neighbors, and we exchanged views all the time. He came to our house. I went to his house when [Alfred] Kroeber was visiting. That kind of exchange was fairly common.

REESE: Were the fellowship programs within the colleges important as well?

KUBLER: The fellows meetings were very sociable, and at the beginning they were very small meetings. There were only twelve or thirteen fellows in each college. Later on, and after the war, that number rose to one hundred, one hundred of the fellows of the college. There's no room for one hundred in the corners of the senior common room and the junior common room added to it. So that the college fellowship has deteriorated by reason of numbers.

REESE: Did you establish close relationships at Jonathan Edwards College?

KUBLER: Very close with almost all the other fellows of the original group and very rewarding. We met weekly. We always dined together weekly, once a week. Those were very rewarding evenings.

REESE: Were they the fellows alone or fellows with students?

KUBLER: No, fellows alone. Hajo Holborn, for example, was one. And Erwin Goodenough and Egbert Miles. You asked about Miles. I talked about mathematics with him.

SMITH: How long did you continue attending those weekly meetings?

KUBLER: Until they became so numerous. I dropped it. I go to the annual festivals of college, but I go to fellows dinners very rarely because they're so crowded.

SMITH: I'm going to throw out some names of other Yale professors. You did mention Hajo Holborn. He was in the history department.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: You had regular exchanges with him?

KUBLER: Yes, always at the fellows meetings. Those fellows meetings were very rewarding, and I missed them when they began to be superpopulated. I don't go to fellows meetings anymore. It's a great loss.

SMITH: Erwin Goodenough.

KUBLER: Erwin Goodenough, yes. He was a historian of religion and a very agnostic one.

SMITH: And also in religion is, of course, Jaroslav Pelikan.

KUBLER: Yes. Yes, I know Jaroslav Pelikan. I think I know fewer faculty today than I knew when I was a beginner. It was easier to seek them out then, at that time. Now it's rather difficult to get in touch with someone unless one has a driving interest in common.

SMITH: With the professors of religion, were the discussions useful to you in terms of understanding, in some heuristic way helping you look at the Mesoamerican religions?

KUBLER: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. One could discuss all sorts of things in those early small table talks.

SMITH: Edward [W.] Bakke?

KUBLER: Yes, I remember him. He was an economist.

SMITH: At the time you were discussing with him, were you getting involved with your demographic work?

KUBLER: He was an economist and rather burly. I never talked with him very much.

SMITH: The history of art does seem to have a lot of overlap with economic issues that don't usually get talked about very much.

KUBLER: It does. I may have discussed such questions with him, but I don't remember them distinctly. I was the only art historian in the college group of fellows.

SMITH: And then there is Robert Chapman Bates.

KUBLER: Oh, yes. He was a bachelor and he lived in college. He taught French. He's very witty--very witty and very good company.

SMITH: Let's see. [to Reese] Do you have any other faculty you want to--?

REESE: No, not really. I think we could hold off till we get more specifically into pre-Columbian and talking about [Wendell] Bennett and others.

SMITH: I wanted to go now into the question of Latin American studies, which does involve pre-Columbian, but not only. I thought I might ask you first about your relationship with Bennett and also with George Vaillant.

KUBLER: Yes. Well, I was always a member of the Latin American Council in those days. I would attend their meetings, and that's where I came to know Bennett. George Vaillant came to Yale occasionally. He was curator at the American Museum of Natural History and also a field archaeologist who had done important work in Mexican archaeology. George Vaillant would come to New Haven periodically, and I would see him and we'd talk about Mexican archaeology. Then, finally, he was on my degree

committee for the doctorate, and I remember an examination for the doctorate at which he was present, invited by the department. He was a very good questioner.

SMITH: Who else was on your committee? Perhaps we could, just for the record, establish that. Focillon was your chair.

KUBLER: Yes. Crosby. Seymour. Any others? But I remember Vaillant with pleasure.

SMITH: I understand he wanted you to take his position at the American Museum.

KUBLER: No, I don't remember that. Where did you learn that?

SMITH: It's in one of the piles of notes I have, so I--

KUBLER: Yes. He died during the war. He was to be cultural attaché in Madrid, and it's thought that-- Preparing for going to Madrid, he'd been recommended to have numerous inoculations. And it's thought in his family and among his friends that these depressed him and that's why he went out in his garden in Philadelphia-- He was then director of the [University of Pennsylvania] University Museum at Philadelphia. He went into his garden and shot himself dead and did not go to Madrid. And it's thought that this excessive medication depressed him.

SMITH: Getting back to Wendell Bennett--

KUBLER: Yes. Wendell Bennett I knew in the Latin

American Council. He was a very good and staunch friend. We had many, many hours of conversation.

SMITH: He was the general editor of the Handbook of South American Indians?

KUBLER: Yes. It was at his invitation that I wrote the article on the colonial Quechua ["The Quechua in the Colonial World"].

SMITH: Now, you had no prior involvement with Peru at that time?

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: Or Indian studies?

KUBLER: I had been to Peru. I think this is after the year in Peru for the Smithsonian Institution. That was in the late forties, early fifties.

SMITH: In 1948, when you taught at the University of San Marcos?

KUBLER: Yes. That was it. We arrived on the night of the revolution--or near the night of the revolution. And so the university was closed. I didn't teach at the university, but I got word to the university-- It was closed. There were tanks in the streets so you couldn't go in. But I got word to the university that I would meet the students in my house. So for that term I had a seminar of about eight. The most brilliant men and women I could think of. They were marvelous. It was a seminar,

and I put them to work on this demographic problem of the nineteenth-century Indian population, how to estimate it. We did it in the government archives with the tax registers.

SMITH: My understanding is that that study has no art historical component whatsoever.

KUBLER: None whatever. Excepting the rather attractive drawings on the flyleaves of the tax registers, all descriptive of the province concerned.

SMITH: So your Peruvian studies really begin more with pure social history.

KUBLER: Yes. That's what they wanted.

SMITH: Your seminar students were, then, not art history.

KUBLER: They were not art historians, no. They were historians. Economic historians, social historians, but no art historians.

SMITH: You had done, of course, your chapters on demography and urbanism for--

KUBLER: For the Mexican book [Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century (1948)].

SMITH: But I guess the obvious question is, where did you get your foundation to be able to direct a demographic study of this nature?

KUBLER: Well, I just made one up. [laughter] We made it up as we went. Where are the documents? We found the

documents and then copied them, analyzed them, broke them down and put them together again.

SMITH: The essay "Quechua in the Colonial World," I thought you wrote that during World War II.

KUBLER: That was at Bennett's invitation, I think. Or was it?

SMITH: Yes.

KUBLER: Julian Steward was the overall director. Bennett was the director of the South American volume. Yes, Bennett's invitation.

SMITH: Did you go to Peru at that time to research that article?

KUBLER: Yes. When did that appear? Handbook of South American Indians, vol. 5.

REESE: I think it was substantially completed in '44, if I remember correctly. It appeared later, the article itself.

KUBLER: Yes. I did that before going to Peru. "The Quechua in the Colonial World."

SMITH: Again, that does not appear to have so much so--

KUBLER: That's an anthropological study, fitting the anthropological template.

SMITH: What puzzles me is, are you redefining your scope of interest and activities beyond art history? Or are you responding to requirements of the government?

KUBLER: I'm responding to conditions in Peru, particularly with the demographic study. The students needed a topic that they could handle within the time I could be with them. This seemed to be a good topic that was available and easy to work with. So it was the topic that seemed possible for this group of students.

SMITH: I mean, before you begin your Pelican history of art books, one might look at the decade of the forties and see someone who started as an art historian drifting into anthropology or sociology, and that there was a flux in the sense of the focus of your career.

KUBLER: I welcomed the opportunity of being there for the Smithsonian, to have this relationship to anthropology and to be in anthropology, to do anthropology.

SMITH: What were your perceptions of the Good Neighbor policy, which is, I think, the overall umbrella that allowed all of this activity to develop?

KUBLER: Well, we always unbelt towards Latin America when we're in trouble, when we need Latin America, and that's unfortunately not the regular case. We don't take Latin America seriously.

SMITH: The change in government policy and national interest allowed these activities to take place. Did you feel that scholars' recommendations were beginning to shape government policy or foundation policy towards Latin

America?

KUBLER: It seemed during the events that that was the case. My own participation was nil, excepting for this case, which is marginal, peripheral.

REESE: Let me see if I can get into this subject in another way. It seems to me that the Peruvian [scholarship]--both on the caste systems [The Indian Caste of Peru, 1795-1940: A Population Study Based upon Tax Records and Census Reports (1952)] and "The Quechua in the Colonial World"--was tremendously concerned with problems of cultural contact and acculturation and obviously informed strongly by anthropological concerns at that point.

KUBLER: And shaped by the editorial format of the Handbook of South American Indians.

REESE: When did you really begin to read and think about problems of cultural contact? Clearly from The Religious Architecture of New Mexico [in the Colonial Period and since the American Occupation (1940)], they're there.

KUBLER: From the beginning, from my first contact with New Mexico.

REESE: I guess they're also in the Etruscan study, the Corinthian ceramics, "Some Etruscan Versions of Corinthian Ceramics." These two are in some way, indirectly, acculturation studies.

KUBLER: Yes. It's the cultural interaction of different groups, yes.

REESE: Do you remember, though, in that period of the late thirties and forties, specific readings that you might have done or specific kinds of studies that led you to think about cultural interchange and acculturation?

KUBLER: Well, I think I always taught that way. My lectures always had a substantial sociological foundation.

SMITH: Is that because of the subject matter or your approach? For instance, would you have as much sociology in a discussion of Italian Renaissance painting or architecture?

KUBLER: Yes. I would set up a question in such terms as well as art historical. But more as a preparation for the art historical approach than as a result of it.

REESE: In 1942 in the Art Bulletin, when you were writing about recent work that was being done on pre-Columbian art, you noted that, "Instead of being able to work with his first cousins--the philologists, the classical scholars, and the medievalists--in European archaeology," one entering the field of pre-Columbian studies must work with "anthropologists, ethnologists, botanists, zoologists, astronomers, metallurgists, meteorologists, paleontologists, and a whole host of other kinds of historians and scientists." That was clearly not

something that one would have learned necessarily from Focillon or from [Erwin] Panofsky. It was emerging, really, in a very new way for you in the thirties and forties. That fascination with the scientist [G. Evelyn] Hutchinson, with the anthropologist Bennett, with the linguist Bates is I think what Richard is trying to get at. I mean, do you feel that that was just the only way you could go to get information? Or was it just the kind of culture at Yale that put you into contact with these people?

KUBLER: Both. Both. It was the only way to go, and it was possible. And no one said I shouldn't.

REESE: Because one thinks of very few other art historical fields in which these kinds of acts at that point in time were taking place--with such a rich mining of other disciplines.

KUBLER: Well, I had the good luck in Peru to start with social science and end with a product.

SMITH: Could we talk a little bit about the Museum of Modern Art conference on studies in Latin America in 1945? Were you involved in the organization of that?

KUBLER: I don't think so. I was invited. I don't remember any executive session of preparation for it. I was invited to take part in it, but I had no hand in its organization.

REESE: This is a conference in which [Tatiana] Proskouriakoff, Robert Rands, [Herbert] Spinden, and Bennett were all discussing these emerging fields.

SMITH: That seems like a critical conference, because it's going beyond Latin American studies to Latin American art and bringing all these people together.

KUBLER: Yes, and in the museum of Modern Art. Was that in connection with the big show at the Museum of Modern Art on twentieth-century Mexican art?

REESE: You know, I'm not sure.

SMITH: I thought that show was later, actually.

REESE: I know in this you made the statement--I'm quoting--"We should take advantage of this opportunity in Latin America to approximate the methods of the ethnologist and the archaeologist. We can enter into the spirit of the art more than we traditionally have done in our museum studies and in our costly library studies. We can enjoy the reality of a field in which masterpieces have not yet monopolized interest and lost their relation to the environment." So this really seems to be a summation of many of the ideas that had emerged for you between 1938 and 1945. Would Focillon have approved of that statement, do you think?

KUBLER: I think so, I think so. He was always open to broadening the approach rather than narrowing it.

REESE: Did you feel that you were, in a statement like that, criticizing much of the art history that was done in this country? That it was not doing these things?

KUBLER: Yes. This was '45.

REESE: Did you feel any response from colleagues? Focillonists at Yale who were, in fact, doing monographs and very much concerned with some of these issues?

KUBLER: I don't remember any criticism from anybody on this score, and they would have read these things. In the forties there was a certain amount of dissatisfaction with the limitations of the history of art which was shared.

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SMITH: Okay, you were saying there was a dissatisfaction.

KUBLER: And one looked for support from other disciplines.

SMITH: To me that's peculiar, because in the United States the history of art was basically just being born.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: And already there is dissatisfaction or a sense of crisis. How do you explain that?

KUBLER: Well, consider the present moment. [laughter]

SMITH: Well?

KUBLER: There's always a state of incompletion?

SMITH: One would hope so.

KUBLER: Actually to be concerned about it isn't good enough, broad enough. The scope is wrong.

REESE: But it also includes this very early critique of the focus on masterpieces. Was this something that you had always felt strongly about, that studying isolated objects was wrongheaded?

KUBLER: Yes. The value system seemed out of kilter. I always thought a lot about the Dutch tulip craze in the seventeenth century and the astronomical prices that were paid for tulips in Holland in the seventeenth century.

And then the collapse of the market and all of that value was destroyed. We see it still with the over-mercantile condition of the art market.

SMITH: At this time, as you were getting more involved with demography and anthropology, were you at all interested in developing a nomothetic model for art historical work?

KUBLER: A series of prescriptions for the proper conduct, no. No, I didn't see my way clear to that.

SMITH: Did you think that art historians might be able to develop laws of cultural development or aesthetic development comparable to what anthropologists were looking for? Were you intrigued by that?

KUBLER: No. I'm still skeptical about anyone who tries. For example, Colin Martindale. He's proposing an evolutionary model for the history of art.

SMITH: What's the relationship in your mind between a taxonomic approach to art history and developing-- What I call nomothetic, but I mean looking for fundamental laws, fundamental patterns.

KUBLER: Well, systems of classification tend toward being nomothetic by saying that it can't be any other way: this is the way it is and it's always true. A system of classification isn't a system of principles.

SMITH: Did you view the classifications that you

developed in Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century not only as provisional--because all work we do is provisional--but as merely one possible way of classifying these objects among many?

KUBLER: I never thought of it otherwise, but I'm not aware of any other way of ordering the material. But possibly someone will.

SMITH: Yet, at the same time, in the mid-forties you criticize the movement towards area studies as not having sufficient attention to method and theory.

KUBLER: Yes. They were so purpose bound--area studies for specific purposes. It didn't seem educationally adequate.

SMITH: Now, who was determining these purposes?

KUBLER: Weren't they set up in Washington?

SMITH: Area handbooks?

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: They were funded by it.

KUBLER: They were funded in Washington and seemed like another boondoggle.

SMITH: And by method and theory were you referring specifically to art historical method and theory?

KUBLER: I thought there was an absence of attention to such matters in the area study program. History of art, if it was present, was being used as a system of

illustrations.

SMITH: If we could, with that in mind, look at, say, the question of Mexican folk art and crafts.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: How did you evaluate what René d'Harnoncourt was doing?

KUBLER: I became aware of what he was doing only much later. I didn't know about it when he was doing it.

SMITH: Did you know the work of Frederick Starr at that time, which had been done significantly earlier?

KUBLER: He's one of the people in the Handbook of South American Indians. He's an anthropologist or an ethnologist.

SMITH: Ethnographer.

KUBLER: Ethnologist, yes. Frederick Starr, yes. I don't remember being affected by his work, but I always respected it.

SMITH: What about Dr. Atl?

KUBLER: Dr. Atl, yes, the artist and the painter. Very powerful painter.

SMITH: He also wrote about Mexican folk art.

KUBLER: Mexican folk art. It was very emotional. Super, super, hyper, hyper emotional.

REESE: Clearly during these years you are a pioneer, and one feels in your work this excitement about being a

pioneer. But then, on the other side, there's an implicit criticism of mainstream art history. As you think back, do you reflect how you were feeling at that time and whether your role as a critic versus your role as the opener of totally new doors--?

KUBLER: Well, I think I learned that one can say something and not do it. One may prescribe something and not do it in the hope that someone will. [laughter] And that's that. That's the end of the lesson.

SMITH: When did you start working with the _Tovar Calendar_?

KUBLER: I've always been interested in these manuscripts. There's a large group of Mexican manuscripts, which is most of the body of what we know about ancient Mexico, writing by Indians and people interested in Indians. It was my first serious study of a manuscript problem. The _Tovar Calendar_ is only part of another manuscript.

SMITH: Did you integrate that study into your course work so that your students were brought into it?

KUBLER: Yes. Yes. Calendar studies are extremely useful to this sort of art history.

SMITH: This is your first-- Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think this is your first major step into publication in the pre-Columbian field.

KUBLER: The _Tovar Calendar_?

SMITH: Yes.

KUBLER: Of this type, yes. It's my first step, yes.

SMITH: How did you feel you were positioning yourself with this publication vis-à-vis the other literature, both on the calendar and on pre-Columbian Mesoamerican art?

KUBLER: Well, it forms part of a group of studies, and they're related. One of them, the most recent of them, is a paper about the place of the Mexican calendar in-- The arithmetical position that it takes. I found that this was a sort of supercycle of something like twenty thousand years divided in four parts. We're still in the first part--first quarter of it--at the present moment. Amerindian prehistory is the first quarter of this cycle of time that is the time cycle of the Aztecs at the time of the conquest. That paper is fairly recent.

REESE: The book itself [The Tovar Calendar: An Illustrated Mexican Manuscript ca. 1585] was written in 1947 and 1948, although it was published slightly later [1951]. Do you remember the genesis of it with Charles Gibson?

KUBLER: Charles was a graduate student at that time, and he was preparing himself with his big book. I invited him to join me on this study. The structure of the book is mine, and then he did the transcriptions. He was more of a scholar of the language than I, so he tested the

language problems that the manuscript offered.

REESE: What interests me as much about the book as its pre-Columbian content is its relationship to text and image studies done by medievalists in this country. Do you recall the kind of reading that you did in bringing Western art historical methods to bear on this other topic?

KUBLER: I would have taken advantage of what I'd learned from manuscript studies of medieval date. "And here's another one."

REESE: Was it a manuscript that you would have shown to Panofsky in those years? Or to any of your former teachers at the Institute?

KUBLER: Well, I don't think it would have meant much to them. It would be so separated from their studies that it would be an imposition to ask them to do the groundwork that would be necessary to understand such a text. Charles Gibson was prepared to do so and did a very good job.

SMITH: In terms of discussions with anthropologists or historians of the preconquest period, were there points of view that you found more helpful than others?

KUBLER: Oh, yes. For example, with Wendell Bennett, I could have discussions about many questions that troubled me in writing, and he was always very helpful. I think I

knew Wendell Bennett best among the anthropologists of the time. I didn't have that friendly relation with any other anthropologist besides Wendell Bennett. He was my main mentor in anthropological study.

REESE: There were two earlier studies of pre-Columbian material I know that you were concerned with. One was the Aztec sculpture ["The Cycle of Life and Death in Metropolitan Aztec Sculpture"] and the other was Mochica sculpture, which I take it you were interested in from the very late thirties.

KUBLER: Yes. That's right.

REESE: Can you talk about those studies and how they interested you?

KUBLER: I wanted to make a corpus of Mochica pottery, which is a very rich subject, and it is too large for the time I had. Fortunately, this work has been done by someone else, and very ably, in California.

REESE: Both of these genres, both Aztec sculpture and Mochica sculpture, share certain qualities. I'm interested in why you were particularly attracted to them as subjects. Have you thought about that?

KUBLER: Well, they were thematically rich fields, both Aztec and Mochica. In a way, all of this was preparation for the Penguin book on ancient America [The Art and Architecture of Ancient America: The Mexican, Maya, and

Andean Peoples (1962)], a handbook for the whole of ancient America. I needed that kind of preparation for every part of that book.

REESE: This is a leading question, I'm afraid, but were you also particularly interested in subjects that would appeal to Western audiences and be able to confirm again the history of art historical technique?

KUBLER: Yes. Yes. The purpose of writing ancient art of America was just that--use it to enlarge our own conception of art and broaden the world picture of the history of art itself.

SMITH: In some degree this leads up to your Penguin volume, but as you were working on the Tovar and the two previous articles that Tom has mentioned, did you feel that art history as a discipline in and of itself had something essential to contribute to pre-Columbian studies, Mesoamerican studies? That anthropologists were missing something or getting something essential wrong?

KUBLER: I did. I did just that. I did feel it was important and that it would be misunderstood by anthropologists with their tools.

SMITH: This again comes in a little bit later, but-- With the controversy over the calendars, there seems to be a great deal of disagreement with you, but it's deepened by criticism that you're in over your head. As an art

historian you're not trained or competent to make these kinds of judgments about calendars.

KUBLER: Well, the case I mentioned of the calendar that is twenty thousand years of repeating cycles is very difficult to disprove. It took me a long time to find it, but it's very difficult to disprove and no one has done it. It fits all the conditions stated in the text I was using. Just wait and see how it fares, how long it lasts before being demolished. [laughter] I expect it might be demolished, but I don't know how to demolish it.

SMITH: I heard a professor say that somebody who did work whose value lasted more than twenty years was doing very uninteresting work indeed. [laughter] In terms of the sense of scholars' building-block work, how do you feel about that question of participating in a process in which you are one person contributing important but necessarily small bits and pieces of a larger structure? And that your work may--in fact, may have to be--superseded?

KUBLER: Oh, I'm thoroughly resigned to it. [laughter] It's fun while doing. What I'm doing is great fun. And then it's easily shelved.

REESE: Well, Latin Americanists would probably be very happy if they had enough students doing serious work to supersede the primary monuments every twenty years.

SMITH: I had another question that I had skipped over,

which is the department's relationship with [Theodore] Sizer and the [Yale University Art] Gallery, the degree to which he used the gallery as a teaching gallery.

KUBLER: Well, Sizer and the gallery were very obliging to us and always made it possible for us to have access to objects and to use them in a teaching way and encouraged us to do so. It's been that way for a long time, and still is. The members of the department have been curators without salary, and only recently, since the time of Charles Sawyer, who was director-- Charles Sawyer wanted to have professional curators who did nothing else, and he started the policy of discarding the professor who was the curator as not sufficiently professional. This continues to the present day with the present director, Mary Neil. She has professional curators instead of professor curators. We used to be curators.

SMITH: Did you curate shows yourself? And if so, what kinds of shows?

KUBLER: Well, I curated the pre-Columbian collection, which is quite a good collection. And I trained students in writing the catalog of it, which made a very tidy volume, of which I wrote practically nothing. It was all written by students. It's a good catalog, but catalogs don't get reviewed. People don't pay very close attention to them. I was a professor curator.

SMITH: In terms of training your students, the professional curator is an aspect of the fact that you're training so many students. But as you were training your students, did you begin to take into consideration that some students did not desire to be researchers but desired to be curators, and therefore might need a different approach in terms of how they were developed?

KUBLER: Well, this way of doing it, that we were working out, is what they ought to know about the approach to the object. I have no doubt about that.

TAPE NUMBER: VI, SIDE ONE

MARCH 29, 1991

SMITH: This morning we have a few follow-up questions from previous sessions. Tom, you wanted to review some of the seminars that Dr. Kubler took at the Institute [of Fine Arts, New York University].

REESE: Yes, these are several seminars which we did not mention yesterday. I will just take them one at a time. Any remembrances you have. [Walter] Friedlaender's Principles of Baroque.

KUBLER: Yes. I remember it, but I remember nothing from it, Friedlaender.

REESE: Do you remember anything about him as a person?

KUBLER: It's a blank.

SMITH: Was his teaching style significantly different from [Erwin] Panofsky's or [Karl] Lehmann's?

KUBLER: It was monotonous. I remember monotony. It was devoid of baroque quality. [laughter]

REESE: Do you remember writing that paper or giving a report in that class?

KUBLER: I probably did. But I don't remember.

REESE: Another is [Richard] Ettinghausen's Mohammedan Art.

KUBLER: Yes. That was very profitable, very instructive,

and I remember that with pleasure.

SMITH: In that class were there established any kind of principles about the study of non-European art that were pertinent to your later work?

KUBLER: Yes, and it was necessary for Spanish studies.

SMITH: Well, of course, yes.

KUBLER: And ancillary. I was interested in it for that reason.

REESE: Was it a lecture course?

KUBLER: It was a lecture course. It was packed with information. He was amply provided with slides. He showed a lot. It was not a course of ideas, but it was a course of facts. His lecturing manner was not the most ingratiating, and I don't think his audience liked him very much. He was rather haughty. [laughter]

REESE: Was the Friedlaender course also a lecture course?

KUBLER: That was a lecture course. These were not seminars. These were lectures in the Metropolitan Museum [of Art] in one of their small groups.

REESE: Another class was [Ernst Emil] Herzfeld's Art of the Ancient Near East.

KUBLER: Yes. He was then very old, but the course was extremely interesting. He talked about his excavations. I enjoyed that for his sake, yes.

REESE: Was the attendance at the course on Islamic art

and on ancient Near Eastern art significantly different from those at lecture courses on Western European art? Smaller or larger?

KUBLER: Well, there were specialists. There were specialists who came to hear them from outside the Institute. That was one of the features of the Institute, that they were open to the adult public for free. Not the student public--the adult public.

REESE: You had mentioned yesterday the Special Problems with Panofsky was the methods class in which you wrote the Escorial paper.

KUBLER: That's right.

REESE: But there is another seminar or lecture course you took with Panofsky, on Michelangelo.

KUBLER: Yes. I remember that well. He commuted from Princeton [University] and often forgot his slides. [laughter]

REESE: Can you say something about what you remember about how it was organized and his method of presentation?

KUBLER: It was very much concerned with the sources for Michelangelo and his own appraisal of the importance of the works. I'd have to look at my notes.

SMITH: That raises a question I had been planning to ask you, which is, how important do you think it is for an art

historian to make an evaluation of the work from a point of view of quality?

KUBLER: It's like the problem of the course. [laughter]

SMITH: Of the course?

KUBLER: Of the course itself. The history of art is already a value judgment, a value judgment that carries a whole panoply of value judgments in the art-- Not popular art, not rustic art, not nursery art, but adult art, art of lasting significance. A whole set of decisions is present in the term "history of art," of previous assumptions, underlying assumptions discarding most art and retaining only the cream level. Which is generally true, excepting when the course is specified as popular art or peasant art or rural art.

SMITH: For instance, often I think, particularly in the study of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, there is almost a necessity for the art historian to say whether so and so is a good artist.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: This becomes less important when you go further back in history, because you take what you've got, kind of.

KUBLER: Yes, what survived. Or what was allowed to survive, yes.

SMITH: In your teaching, would you insist on students

making those kinds of value judgments?

KUBLER: I try to steer away from them, and let them form their judgments as they became visually familiar with the literature and with the works themselves. I didn't try to affect their evaluations, but I tried to open the study of the objects as widely as possible.

SMITH: What about fellow students at the Institute? We didn't talk about who else was there when you were there that you had more or less close relations with.

KUBLER: Yes. I remember many of them--more or less well. Phyllis Williams [Lehmann] was one. Fred Hart was another. Many outstanding ones I remember. I would say that the whole student body at the Institute in those years was about one hundred, and it was very difficult to know all of them. The Metropolitan settings and the meetings were the only exposure to people. One didn't see them elsewhere.

REESE: Of the one hundred, were those largely professional art historians in training, or were there also people from the community who would come?

KUBLER: Those were also people from the community who were paying by the course. They would buy a course. In many of the seminars there were no such people--adult listeners who were paying by the course.

SMITH: Would these people be university-type people or

society--?

KUBLER: More the latter. And women with time on their hands. Retired men with their wives sometimes. But those were more the courses of lectures drawing the adult citizens.

REESE: At that point there was no library of the Institute itself.

KUBLER: Yes. It had its library in the Lehman house. It was a good library and it still is a very good library. It's in the Doris Duke house on Fifth Avenue. The library is much larger than in my day. It's a first-rate art history library.

REESE: Was your contact with professors like Panofsky or Lehmann largely during and after class?

KUBLER: Exactly, yes. Panofsky was always commuting. Lehmann was commuting from New Rochelle [New York]. They commuted, so that contact was before, during, and after class, mostly after class. Panofsky would like to have us come with him to the bar. He found the bar-- Not because he was alcoholic, but he found the bar a congenial place. We'd have beers. But he was the only one to do that.

SMITH: Part of the formation of art history as a discipline does mean establishing a public constituency for it, where you have people who want--to use a word that we've been using a lot but haven't unpacked yet--a

"rigorous" approach rather than, say, a Ruskinian, aestheticist approach. But did their presence and perhaps the need to build up a public interested in more intellectually serious art history affect the classes, the lectures, in some way? Was there a tension between the highest standards of scholarship and the need to speak to a broader public?

KUBLER: The presence of the adult outsiders in the seminars was very rare. It was mainly in the lecture courses. And in the lecture courses they didn't interfere at all. They didn't speak, and there were appointments with the instructor for the papers, and one had access to the instructors as much as needed.

REESE: Was there any tension present during those years between the museum crowd and the scholarly, art historical--?

KUBLER: The museum crowd was never large. It's quite expensive, for one thing. And the people who came really had nothing to say and weren't invited to say anything. One said what he had to say in the lecturer's office on appointment, talking about the paper. [laughter]

REESE: What about the differences between archaeologists and art historians? Did that emerge at all during those years?

KUBLER: It wasn't a rift in any sense. Karl Lehmann was

as much or more an art historian as an archaeologist, but his reputation was as an archaeologist.

REESE: Could you describe a little bit Karl Lehmann as a person, lecturer, scholar?

KUBLER: Yes. He was very slight in physique and he had surprisingly blond hair. It was naturally blond. He was a natural blond. He had a lot of hair and rather sharp features. I think he was Jewish, but he had this blond hair and it was natural, it was naturally blond. He spoke English very well with a certain accent. His lectures were always interesting, always laced with ideas, rarely drowning with fact.

REESE: You went to both lecture classes and seminars with Lehmann?

KUBLER: Yes. I was with him so much that he wanted me to come with him to Samothrace as one of the excavators, which I declined, because I'd decided that I would attend to Americanist studies rather than become a classical archaeologist.

SMITH: How did the faculty at the Institute feel about your proposed dissertation topic, the religious architecture of New Mexico?

KUBLER: Oh, I don't think they paid any attention to it, and I never submitted it to them.

SMITH: No, but did you ever discuss it with them?

KUBLER: I don't think so. I might have talked about it with Lehmann. I certainly talked about it with [Henri] Focillon.

SMITH: You were going to the Institute under the auspices of Yale University, right?

KUBLER: In a sense. I had left Yale graduate school for New York University and the Institute and was paying tuition there instead of Yale.

SMITH: But you did not intend to get your higher degree at the Institute.

KUBLER: I think I had a fellowship, actually. A fellowship with a little money for the tuition, which I accepted. I didn't ask for it. But I think I was sort of a Yale fellow at the Institute. Perhaps with a small stipend.

REESE: I wonder if you could give a similar sketch of Panofsky, of his appearance and personality?

KUBLER: Oh, he was, one might say, vibrant--vibrant. He lectured at high speed, but always intelligible and always completely coherent in what he showed. It was a joy to listen to him.

REESE: How old was he then?

KUBLER: I would say fifties. He commuted from Princeton, from the Institute for Advanced Study.

REESE: You said he frequently reported on his current

work in the seminar. What was he at work on that you recall?

KUBLER: Well, at the time I was in the seminar, it began with his reading us a paper he'd just written. It was on a Renaissance topic involving antiquity. He read this to us as a model of the sort of paper he would like from us. So this was really a seminar in art historical writing. We talked a great deal in the seminar about the different ways of writing the history of art and examined and criticized examples of current writing, and it was a professional seminar on writing the history of art.

REESE: Do you remember either visits by José Gudiol or by [José] López-Rey at that time? Had they already been at the Institute?

KUBLER: Yes. There was a strong Hispanic push in the curriculum because of Walter Cook. Walter Cook was the head of the Institute, and he brought these people and chose well. I don't think they respected him as much as he respected them. He was already out of scholarship and into administration--very good administrator.

SMITH: I'd like to go back to the statement you made in 1945 that Tom quoted from yesterday. As I was thinking about it more, it seemed to me that particular section seems to be a statement where you're positioning yourself philosophically. I would like to unpack it a little bit

and find out--beyond the general statements of principle that are there--who it is directed against, who it is directed towards. [to Reese] Do you have the statement handy?

REESE: I'll look back at my notes.

SMITH: Maybe you could just read it into the record.

KUBLER: Should I read it aloud? "Instead of being able to work with his first cousins--the philologists, the classical scholars, and the medievalists--in European archaeology, the historian of art who wishes to acquaint himself with American studies is heavily dependent upon the work of anthropologists, ethnologists, botanists, zoologists, astronomers, metallurgists, meteorologists, paleontologists, and a whole host of other kinds of historians and scientists." That's the quotation.

REESE: I thought there was another--

SMITH: Actually, I think there was another one.

KUBLER: And then it follows, "This was 1942. Then in 1945 there was a conference on studies in Latin American art held at the Museum of Modern Art to encourage the establishment of new relations between the history of art and the disciplines of social sciences. In particular, these are political, economic, and religious history; anthropological studies in their linguistic, ethnological and archaeological branches; developmental and social

psychology; sociology; and human geography. We should take advantage of this--" And what's the date of them?

REESE: Nineteen forty-five.

KUBLER: 'Forty-five. "We should take advantage of this opportunity in Latin America to approximate the methods of the ethnologist and the archaeologist. We can enter into the spirit of the art more than we traditionally have done in our museum studies and in our costly library studies. We can enjoy the reality of a field in which masterpieces have not yet monopolized interest and lost their relation to the environment."

SMITH: Okay, there is a statement of a program, but that's specifically for Latin American studies. But in terms of your view of art history at that time, how was that statement positioning you? Who were you criticizing implicitly in that statement?

KUBLER: I don't think I'm criticizing anyone, but addressing what I hoped would be future investigators of colonial art, especially Latin American. I'm talking to a future audience.

SMITH: But it does seem that you're saying, "We have the chance to avoid the errors that have plagued the study of the European classical tradition."

KUBLER: No, I don't think I meant to say that. I was then respectful and have always remained respectful of the

history of art and its practitioners in my time, with exceptions. But I did hope to see an opening for younger people in studies that were less metropolitan and more provincial and rustic and colonial and non-European.

SMITH: Did you believe that non-European art might--because of its different subject matter and different methodologies--lead to a reconceptualization of how art history in general should function?

KUBLER: Yes. Yes, indeed.

SMITH: What about the question of connoisseurship at this time? Was that a divisive issue amongst art historians?

KUBLER: No, it's a necessary sharpening of the sense of discrimination between prime and repetitious works of art.

SMITH: And, of course, in your pre-Columbian work I would assume that that's an important question.

KUBLER: One can transfer the techniques of connoisseurship very easily and be left with the need to proceed further.

SMITH: I've noticed that you had done this work on the [Walter and Louise] Arensberg collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

KUBLER: Yes. That was published.

SMITH: Yes, that was published. Were you called upon by private collectors to give advice often? Or by museums?

KUBLER: Yes. The Arensberg was a case of-- Fiske Kimball

wanted that catalog [The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection, II: Pre-Columbian Sculpture] and asked me to do it.

SMITH: Is that something that you as an art historian expected to do a fair amount of, to advise people on the nature of their collection?

KUBLER: Well, I didn't invite it or want it particularly, but this occasion arose repeatedly to do a catalog of a collection--the Arensberg collection and then the Yale collection itself. But I didn't become a consulting expert on the commerce in these divisions of art--ancient American art, for example.

SMITH: What about the question of the authenticity of pieces? As I understand, in the Arensberg collection there were several pieces which--

KUBLER: Several dubious pieces--and I said so. And the same with the Yale collection. I published all of the pieces that were not pre-Columbian but passing as pre-Columbian, giving reasons and encouraging the students who wrote the account of the pieces that were not pre-Columbian to do so.

SMITH: How much were you involved in buying works for the [Yale] University Art Gallery?

KUBLER: Almost not at all. That was always the director's privilege, and the professorial curators were

not taken into account by the director when making his decisions or her decisions.

SMITH: Even in an area as specialized as pre-Columbian?

KUBLER: Even there, yes. The professor curator was held at arm's length by the director. The director wanted his own curators.

REESE: This reminds me of another possible split in the profession at that time, and that is those people who considered themselves architectural historians as opposed to those who considered themselves art historians, including architecture. What could you say about that?

KUBLER: Well, they split, they split. There's a Society of Architectural Historians which meets with the College Art Association. There are annual meetings. It's a distinctness that is insisted upon by the architectural historians, who generated this division between themselves and the rest of the art historians. I'd like to be part of both.

REESE: Was that something that Focillon had any definite opinions about, that there were architectural historians and art historians?

KUBLER: Oh, no. He would have thought of them as art historians, too. They are art historians. The architectural historians are art historians. He would have opposed this division of interest.

SMITH: I know yesterday you noted in passing about Carroll Meeks that he was very clearly influenced by his very early experience with Dean [Everett] Meeks and the architecture program. Could one make such distinctions, really, in the thirties and forties? That there were those who came out of architecture schools and those who came out of art history programs, both dealing with architecture?

KUBLER: Yes. It was already apparent. And Carroll Meeks was a case in point. Trained as an architect, but never practicing, but with a distinct point of view and never consulted in relation to the other arts. He was always treated as a professional architect, which he really wasn't, because he had never practiced.

SMITH: In relistening to the tapes from yesterday, there was a strong impression that there was a tension between art history as an intellectual discipline and the museums. I'm wondering if I was mishearing that, or was there in fact a tension between the needs of a developing academic discipline and what was happening with museums, the growth of museums?

KUBLER: I think that was reflective of the situation here. We, as art historians, were struggling for recognition as a department. This was opposed by the School of Fine Arts, as it then still was called.

SMITH: But when you talked about the Harvard [University] art history program, there was a sense that it might not have been as strong as it could be intellectually because of its museum focus.

KUBLER: Exactly. They were manufacturing museum directors and museum curators. [laughter]

SMITH: But that seems to reinforce the idea that there really is a division between art history and museums.

KUBLER: Very much, very much. Art historians become museum directors and museum curators. When they do, then they become museum people and have a totally different life-style--no longer with students but with a community or a city.

SMITH: Do you think the necessity of presenting art and communicating to a broader public pulls down the quality of their scholarly work?

KUBLER: Well, they don't have the detachment. They are in the business of maintaining interest in their museum and offering instruction--the opportunity to see works of art tailored to their constituency. So that the work of a museum official, whether it is a curator or director, is very different from the life of a professor in a university teaching students. A totally different kind of communication.

SMITH: Were you involved, or you and your students

involved, in the presentation of the works of art in the permanent collection, in the labeling?

KUBLER: Somewhat.

SMITH: Preparation of background material, such as this little brochure that's been done, "Art of Ancient Americas"?

KUBLER: Yes. Surely whenever the opportunity for an exhibition arose, the students would be enlisted who wanted to work in that direction.

SMITH: In returning again to the early forties, there's a small quote from College Art Journal that you edited in 1944 on Latin American art, which said, "Nothing is ready for the Latin American past. One must contrive his own mechanisms of adaptation." I mean, to me, this stance is the symbol of a thrust within your own work to find a solitary path into unexplored fields, finding a field for creativity and an ability to order material. That the museum is a satiated field--as dirt archaeology is a satiated field, as are traditional Italian studies in art history. Can you reflect on that at all?

KUBLER: Yes. At that time I was concerned about opportunities for students in the field, and they were very few. The occasions for their participating in large archaeological companies that were formed for the excavation of a site were very limited. Art historians

were never considered. That was dominated by anthropology, anthropological archaeology-- It was a distinct division of archaeology, incidentally, with very firm boundaries. Anthropologists, not humanists.

SMITH: In your training of Latin Americanists at this time, were you thinking that most of them would be able to find college positions teaching Latin American art history?

KUBLER: Actually, that happened.

SMITH: But what did you expect?

KUBLER: Well, I hoped that would happen, that students working with me could find posts in which they would be allowed to continue such studies, Latin American studies, whether they're archaeological or colonial or modern. And that happened without any special effort from me but by a sort of evolution in American education that was going on at that time. Opportunities for students in this direction were opening up in this wave of change.

SMITH: Had you expected that the American university system would expand as rapidly as it did in the postwar period?

KUBLER: No. It did though. It did, and it was extremely open to new fields--unlike the situation we were discussing in Germany with unification.

REESE: I wonder if you could try to evoke the feelings

you had as you first went into Mexico in the thirties and early forties trying to chart this vast number of monuments that were on roads previously untraveled. Just what was it like to be a pioneer there, with the Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century [1948]?

KUBLER: The main problem was to find the key connections among the monuments. When that happened, it was possible to say things about monuments one hadn't seen that had disappeared. And if you couldn't get to the monument, you could say something about it by what you knew from contemporary documents. So that the book pretends to direct knowledge of more monuments than I actually visited. But I could say valid things about some monuments I never saw that had disappeared or that I couldn't reach. I didn't see everything.

REESE: I'm thinking, too, just the physical conditions of travel.

KUBLER: Oh, those were not overwhelming with car and mobility. It's just a matter of time and patience.

REESE: And the techniques you developed of sketching the plans of the buildings, the photography.

KUBLER: Well, all that labor had been done and was in government archives, preservation of monuments, which I had access to. The Mexicans were extremely generous with that material, and I could draw on those unpublished files

and find documentation that had never appeared in a public form.

SMITH: What about when you moved into pre-Columbian work? Were there similar photographic archives that you could draw upon?

KUBLER: That's a different problem. These colonial monuments had never been published. Actually, the original plan of the government was to publish the colonial monuments of every state.

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KUBLER: That archive, since my use of it, has disappeared. It was an archive on which the government had spent large resources, on every state of the thirty-six. And that archive has disappeared. What has become of it I don't know.

REESE: Could you say something about the pension in Mexico and the political climate in Mexico during these years?

KUBLER: We had our headquarters in a family hotel. It's a pension, where the family owned the little compound. The rooms had a dining room and offered meals and service, room service, for guests. At this time the presence of spies and counterspies was everywhere in Mexico, including this pension.

SMITH: Was this during the [Lázaro] Cárdenas government?

KUBLER: Just after it. During, yes, and after it. When did it end, the Cárdenas regime?

SMITH: I think his sexenario was '36 to '42.

KUBLER: Yes. It was Cárdenas's time. Very agitated time. Beneficial change in Mexico, but with the war, spies were everywhere. And this pension had German spies who worked for Bayer Aspirin, and they would go out in the

provinces and do whatever they had to do as spies. In the pension there were also spies from the U.S. who were spying on the German spies and on each other. [laughter] Spies from the marines who were spying on spies from the navy, from the U.S. Navy. So that it was a constant theater of equivocation and mistaken personalities. We were always thought to be spies. We would go out on these long trips and come back to our rooms where we left our belongings, and it was always assumed that we were spies.

SMITH: To your knowledge, was the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] ever using art historians in Latin America or elsewhere?

KUBLER: Not to my knowledge. Not to my knowledge. The CIA didn't exist yet.

SMITH: Not at that time, but it's a common myth-- And perhaps not a myth, at least for anthropologists. I think an American scholar in some of these countries--

KUBLER: Yes. We were assumed to be spies. And we were not. [laughter]

REESE: Of course, the Good Neighbor policy was founded on the basis that scholars would make, if not spies, the best relationships for America.

SMITH: Well, yesterday you mentioned in Peru you arrived in this military coup. Here's the political turmoil in Mexico. And there's a certain degree in your essays of--

There are references, particularly in relationship to the "Indigenismo and Mestizaje" ["Indianism, Mestizaje, and Indigenismo as Classical, Medieval, and Modern Traditions in Latin America"], to political and ideological turmoils in Latin America. How did political considerations in Latin America affect--? And I guess Iberian studies, too, given that Franco controlled Spain until '76. How did political considerations affect what could and could not be studied in these countries? What could or could not be addressed in terms of theoretical issues? The repercussions of national and geopolitical questions upon scholarship that might affect the decisions that you made or that your students made or colleagues made.

KUBLER: I never found any. I was a private citizen traveling with my wife. We were private citizens. We always said we were private citizens. We used contacts in the country, useful contacts such as university people and museum people, to have access to the materials we needed, and we were never impeded or hindered in any way.

SMITH: To take an extreme example, I would think under Franco, in Spain, if a scholar went in wanting to study Catalan national art, that would have been frowned upon and perhaps discouraged in some way.

KUBLER: I don't think so.

SMITH: No?

KUBLER: I don't think so, no. The action of Franco's organizations with respect to scholarly travel was nil. As far as we were concerned-- We were there during lots of the Franco time. Never impeded in any way. On the contrary, access to the sorts of collections we needed--photographs, documents--was always available.

REESE: A related question might be how things have changed in both Latin America and Mexico in the years that the professions of art history and archaeology have become large and institutionalized. Did you find it, actually, easier in your early days than in more recent times?

KUBLER: It was easier then than it is now. I would hate to be in the position now of doing what I did in Mexico. At that time it was still a rather loose governmental organization.

SMITH: Would it be a desire on the part of the Mexican government that Mexican art historians do the primary research, as opposed to North Americans? Or would it have to do with fear of things being exported?

KUBLER: No, there was no animosity. I never found any animosity as being a foreigner, an outsider. Mexicans were extraordinarily hospitable, especially the people working in ministries. Very agreeable people to work with, the people who actually controlled the documentary sections and the photographic archives. They were very

generous, and they didn't have any tradition of people coming to ask for photographs. They gave them away. [laughter]

SMITH: So what has the change been, then?

KUBLER: Well, everything has become more bureaucratic, with bureaucratic obstacles to research. Those were rather late in coming.

SMITH: The bureaucratic obstacles motivated by what?

KUBLER: Bureaucracy, the nature of bureaucracy.

REESE: Yesterday we talked briefly about the war years at Yale, and you had noted that there was not a significant decrease in the number of students. But I wonder if colleagues in the department were involved in identifying, say, monuments that should be protected, or whether after the war-- Restoration activities in France and Italy, whether art historians became much involved in these efforts.

KUBLER: Yes. We had that at Yale. Many Yale professors and graduate students served the government in those ways.

REESE: But largely traveling abroad or doing--?

KUBLER: Traveling abroad and monuments service. For example, Würzburg, the palace at Würzburg was saved, literally, by a Yale graduate named [John] Skilton. He had a very direct hand in preventing the destruction of the palace, as a monument officer. And a number of Yale

faculty were monument officers in Italy and in Greece and in Spain. They were also protecting collections.

REESE: Do you have specific recollections of the mood of art history during the war in this country? Of not being able to travel abroad or traveling abroad under conditions that were not those of the scholarship that one expected?

KUBLER: Well, I was never called for service because of my medical record--TB. So I stayed on and taught. The university changed radically with the preparation of military needs, in which the university was participating. So the education was transformed, and the place was full of military. The teaching load was much heavier. We stayed on all through the war, and I taught all summer and then winter and spring terms, too. But the summer load was additional to the regular load, and that summer load was art history courses with people who were going to be in the battlefield.

SMITH: Was there any specific military purpose for having these soldiers given art history classes?

KUBLER: No, these were the electives of the students in military service. They came in the usual numbers to the big lecture courses and what courses we had. So course work went on all through the war, all year long. That was the difference. I think that was true in many departments.

REESE: Then the faculty was reduced as well. Were [Sumner] Crosby and [Charles] Seymour [Jr.] here or--?

KUBLER: They were active here. They also had duties abroad in the monuments surveys. I didn't have any part in that, but they did.

SMITH: Was that because you were focused on Hispanic--

KUBLER: That's it.

SMITH: --and Latin America?

KUBLER: And Latin America and ancient America. I continued teaching the same courses.

REESE: Do you have recollections after the war? In other words, many careers were interrupted by the war and service. Yet, at the same time, the G.I. Bill brought many people like Don [Donald] Robertson back to Yale for language studies. Charles Gibson might have been an interrupted career. Since we've talked about the war, I wonder if you could think about the immediate postwar era.

KUBLER: The immediate postwar was an enlargement of our studies and an enlargement of the faculty. We took on more instructors.

SMITH: What about the nature of the students? Did they change at all? Were they older?

KUBLER: Yes, they were older. They were older, and mixed in with a great many more younger people.

SMITH: At other institutions the record seems to be that the whole caliber of the student body changed from-- I'll say from '45 to '52. Where you had a much older student body, ex-veterans, who were much more assertive of their own ideas and knew what they wanted to get out of their education.

KUBLER: Yes, I remember that atmosphere. Yes, it was a different audience. It was a different audience after the war, a more exigent audience, more critical.

SMITH: Did the students, from your point of view, have greater clarity about what they wanted to achieve?

KUBLER: Not really--with exceptions.

SMITH: So they might be more demanding, but not necessarily more intellectually rigorous.

KUBLER: Well, they were still college students. [laughter] They didn't have much yet. They hadn't gone through the mill.

REESE: I'm trying to remember the students at Yale during those years. And I think of, as I've said, Donald Robertson, Spielvogel, Gibson. I don't know if Robert [Ferris] Thompson was there right after the war.

KUBLER: Robert Thompson, yes, in the fifties.

SMITH: Now, you've said you expanded your faculty. Lecturers and professors?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: What areas were the expansions directed into?

KUBLER: Well, I can't tell you exactly and with direct knowledge, but the sciences expanded quickly.

SMITH: Oh, I was thinking in particular in terms of the art history department.

KUBLER: The art history expanded because of the demand in the courses, so that we employed more instructors and were able to have a ladder of promotion. I think that was a time when the department was no longer an experiment. It was taken for granted, and its needs were attended to more directly and more immediately than before.

SMITH: Would you expand the number of people teaching in European art? For instance, you had the medievalist. Would you have two medievalists at that point?

KUBLER: Yes. Oh, yes.

SMITH: What about expansion into Islamic art?

KUBLER: The whole period was one of the flourishing of medieval studies throughout the system of the American universities. Medieval studies came into a sort of golden age, which no longer is the case. Medieval studies have shriveled in many universities where they used to be more important. So changes of curriculum are to be noted.

SMITH: The expansion of the areas.

KUBLER: Expansion of some areas of study, not at the expense of others, but shriveling of others. Medieval

studies shriveled after the 1950s.

SMITH: Do you remember your first trip back to Europe after the war? I know you had mentioned one time that you met [André] Leroi-Gourhan in the forties.

KUBLER: Yes. That was a congress. We attended a congress just after the war. The French were still eating corn bread, which they detested--corn bread which we had provided them with. [laughter] I remember we traveled with an enormous amount of luggage with foodstuffs we knew would be needed in Paris. We were wined and dined in Paris, and we always had some supplies with us when we were guests.

REESE: Did you travel beyond Paris?

KUBLER: Yes. We went to Bordeaux, and we went to places we both wanted to see. We traveled quite a bit that summer.

REESE: Into Germany at all?

KUBLER: No, not at all. Only France.

REESE: What kind of recollections do you have of having revisited Europe after the war?

KUBLER: Oh, well, some of them were very amusing. Going to Margaux, where the Margaux wine-- That house at Margaux. I wouldn't call it a château, but that wine factory had been a Kommandantur of the Germans. They occupied it and kept it very orderly and didn't damage it

in any way and didn't damage the wine cellar, which is a historic wine cellar. They had only recently left. So we were interested in seeing the wine cellar, which we did. The wine cellar was full of suspended alcohol in the atmosphere. It was cool, but just breathing for a couple of hours is intoxicating. We really came out into the summer sunshine intoxicated, without having drunk anything. So we decided to take the train up to the end of the Médoc, which is the point where the English always embarked and debarked in the Hundred Years War, to the _Cathédrale_ _engloutie_ by the sands of the Atlantic, and sobered up in the waves.

SMITH: I wanted to get into your College Art Association involvement, but before that I wanted to ask you, how did the McCarthy period play itself out at Yale University or in the art history department? Were there problems?

KUBLER: No, it was a distant storm. It didn't touch us at all.

SMITH: In terms of the College Art Association, when did you start attending its meetings?

KUBLER: I suppose from the time I became an instructor.

SMITH: 'Thirty-eight. Could you give us a thumbnail sketch of the climate of the meetings of that time? The highlights.

KUBLER: It was a very small association then. It's much

bigger now. The meetings were interesting and worth attending. Becoming acquainted with colleagues all around the country. It was a very useful organization. To this day it still includes artists. Artists attend the annual meetings, and there are sessions they arrange on their own. There is that division.

SMITH: The studio instructors.

KUBLER: The artist will come to hear lectures by the art historian, but the historians don't go very often to the meetings of the artists.

SMITH: What about the leadership of the organization at that time? Can you give us any recollections?

KUBLER: It was the older art historians, with a professional staff assisting them. The professional staff really ran the affairs of the College Art Association.

SMITH: Within the organization, did you feel that there was room for the kind of perspectives that you and others were bringing into the field?

KUBLER: I think so. They were accessible. Speakers on topics of my interest were not infrequent.

SMITH: Both theoretical interests and specific topic interest?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Was there any expression of resentment at new theoretical importation into the field?

KUBLER: I don't remember it.

SMITH: We had talked initially about, for instance, the Dean [Everett] Meeks class, and I would presume that most of the people attending the meeting at that time were still teaching those kinds of classes.

KUBLER: Yes. Well, Dean Meeks was another generation. [laughter]

REESE: Was there a sense of camps among art historians?

KUBLER: Well, yes, of course. Each campus was a camp. [laughter]

SMITH: Maybe we could expand on that, since I think you've talked a little bit about Harvard and--

KUBLER: Yes. The distinct missions of the universities, yes.

SMITH: --NYU [New York University] and Princeton, but maybe we could go beyond that to some of the other campuses. For instance, did [University of California] Berkeley have a contingent at that time? What was your perception of Berkeley or of [University of] Wisconsin [-Madison]?

KUBLER: Berkeley never made much of a representation at the College Art Association. I think the smaller campuses sent more speakers and persons attending. But Berkeley's history of art didn't seem to be as notable as Stanford [University], for example, or UCLA. If I have an accurate

impression-- But I never was-- I became editor of the Art Bulletin, but I was never part of the administrative machinery of the College Art Association.

SMITH: What about the University of Chicago?

KUBLER: University of Chicago was very active, and I was invited to teach there for a summer. I knew people at the University of Chicago who were respected professors.

SMITH: How would you compare their method with the Yale method or the Yale approach?

KUBLER: I don't know of any distinct character that the University of Chicago's history of art had at that time. They had a whole battery of courses. A German was--

REESE: [Ulrich] Middeldorf.

KUBLER: Middeldorf was a principal figure and the organizing figure of their activities. But I never had the sense that it was a distinct mission.

REESE: How about the University of Pennsylvania, both in the field of archaeology and art history?

KUBLER: The archaeology was much stronger; art history was always the lesser organization. And the University Museum is a remarkable museum.

REESE: You knew Robert [C.] Smith well in those years?

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: Could you say something about Robert's--?

KUBLER: Yes, the Portuguese specialist who spoke

Portuguese so well that he was arrested in Lisbon during the war. [laughter]

SMITH: Arrested? How come?

KUBLER: Well, it was suspicious that a foreigner--an obvious foreigner--should speak Portuguese so well. So they arrested him to see who he was. [laughter]

SMITH: Well, we'll get into the Portuguese studies later. And maybe we'll discuss him somewhat then. How did you come to be chosen as editor of the Art Bulletin?

KUBLER: Well, that was always the work of a committee and of the College Art Association on the Art Bulletin, on its publications, which also included the Art Journal. That committee picked me. I think there's probably the work of one person who would be-- I've forgotten his name.

REESE: But that was during the period between 1945 and '47.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Did you receive institutional support from Yale to undertake those tasks?

KUBLER: Not really. Not really. Perhaps I was relieved of a course, but I had no funding and the College Art Association gave me no salary. It was really a donated service.

SMITH: What was the state of the Art Bulletin when you inherited it?

KUBLER: It was very healthy, and I tried to introduce a new feature or two. I remember getting René d'Harnoncourt to submit something for an exhibition he had organized--Oceanic art--but I really didn't change anything permanently.

REESE: It put you in a unique position to sense the temperature of art history at that moment in receiving so many articles.

KUBLER: Yes. I started as a book review editor, and then they made me editor.

REESE: Were the articles largely from senior professionals? Or already had a large number of articles by younger--?

KUBLER: All up and down the ladder. There were lots of articles submitted, and then lots were rejected.

REESE: Were there any episodes that emerged from such conditions?

KUBLER: No. I don't think so. No. I don't remember any. It was a three-year term, I think.

SMITH: Did you feel a necessity of balancing different approaches to art history method?

KUBLER: Well, I tried to favor subjects I was interested in. In encouraging René d'Harnoncourt-- He didn't write very much, wasn't in the habit of writing, but had interesting ideas.

REESE: About the same time, in 1945, you were the guest editor of a special issue of the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* dedicated to Latin American art.

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: Do you remember the conditions under which that invitation occurred?

KUBLER: No, and there was nothing singular about them. They had been interested, the architectural historians, in amplifying the range of their publication, and did so effectively.

REESE: Do you recall whether it was something you proposed to them or that they invited you to do?

KUBLER: Well, I think I suggested it to them and they accepted for that issue. Since then, they've always been very open to the history of all forms of building and to connections with the rest of the history of art. But they had that already.

SMITH: Let's go back to the growth of the department at Yale. We might start with the chairs of the department as you recall them. If you could give us a thumbnail sketch of the various chairs and of the department's perception of its goals, how that might have developed. I presume Focillon was the first chair.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: When he died, who succeeded him as chair?

KUBLER: Crosby--Sumner Crosby. And Sumner Crosby stayed as chairman for a long time and with the approval of the rest of us. He was almost a permanent chairman. Then the rest of us took our turns after him. So that the department was really administered by Crosby for, oh, at least ten years, maybe longer.

SMITH: Did he have particular views about how the department should grow?

KUBLER: He was attentive to the needs of everyone. That's why he stayed so long. [laughter] And he was very wise, a very wise chairman.

REESE: The first new faculty member to be added to the original core was Vincent Scully?

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: Do you recall the moment in which Scully was invited to the faculty and discussions about the role modern architecture would play within the new department?

KUBLER: I don't remember. I don't remember any special discussion or that his appointment was a problem. It seemed obvious.

SMITH: Whose idea was it?

KUBLER: Well, perhaps it was just so obvious that he should be asked-- I've forgotten-- His shingle style [The Shingle Style and the Stick Style: Architectural Theory and Design from Richardson to the Origins of Wright]

had appeared, and that was much approved. We knew there were more. [laughter]

REESE: He had heard Focillon lecture.

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: And had he taken classes with you as a graduate student or undergraduate?

KUBLER: Yes. I taught him.

SMITH: I noticed in Tom's notes there's a comment that Lehmann scolded you for allowing Scully to do a paper on Greek art. Do you recall that episode?

KUBLER: No. It's vanished. No, I don't remember. Oh, I think Lehmann disapproved of Scully's famous book.

REESE: The Earth, the Temple, and the Gods.

KUBLER: The Earth, the Temple, and the Gods, yes.

SMITH: Okay, that's what it is.

KUBLER: He disapproved of that, yes. I do remember. I tried to have Lehmann appointed to a chair at Yale. But he was appointed elsewhere, and I had no success with the suggestion at Yale.

REESE: Where there any other senior faculty from outside Yale whom you remember being invited, particularly during these early years? The Lehmann appointment would have been in the fifties, so--

KUBLER: Yes, if it had gone anywhere. But there was opposition from the classics department. The Department

of Classics was undergoing a transformation. They had had a long period of being dominated by archaeologists, and they wanted to return dominion to the philologists. The philologists were in the ascendant, and they rejected any more archaeologists. That's why Lehmann was--

SMITH: Would that have had to have been a dual appointment, given his background?

KUBLER: Not necessarily. It wouldn't have made any difference to us whether he was in classics or in history of art or both.

REESE: Frank Brown was at the classics department for a long time.

KUBLER: Frank Brown was classics, yes. He was an archaeologist, but he was also a philologist. He had strength in both camps.

REESE: I was interested in pursuing the courses, the range of courses, that you were teaching after the war. Were you teaching courses in prehistory or ancient civilizations beyond pre-Columbian?

KUBLER: No. After the war I was more and more concentrating on ancient America and colonial Latin America.

REESE: Where you teaching any methodology courses?

KUBLER: And methodology courses.

REESE: You did teach that that early.

KUBLER: Yes. I taught them steadily before, during, and after the war.

SMITH: What about students who were interested in African art or East Asian art, other non-European art? Were you the person who would direct them?

KUBLER: No, but Robert Thompson was appointed to be the Africanist, and remains.

SMITH: When was he appointed?

KUBLER: Oh, I would say late fifties.

SMITH: What would you have done before his appointment? Would you have had students who would come to you and say, "I'm interested in an aspect of African art"? What would you tell them?

KUBLER: I would suggest that they go to the anthropology department.

SMITH: Really?

REESE: Did you ever teach African, Islamic, or Asian art as a part of the courses that you did?

KUBLER: Not really, no, no. Not within a serious use of time.

SMITH: So the Introduction to Art class that, I presume, you had to teach from time to time--

KUBLER: Yes. I took part in the introductory course along with the rest of the department. Each of us lectured on his specialty. That's the way that course was

run for a long time. That was a huge course with four hundred undergraduates attending.

SMITH: So that would really be a focus on the development of European art, from Egypt to--

KUBLER: No, it was world art.

SMITH: World art.

KUBLER: World art, with scant attention to the lesser breeds. [laughter]

REESE: I'm particularly interested because of Scully's The Earth, the Temple, and the Gods what general training he might have had in the field of prehistory, of cave painting, in the methodology of dealing with European prehistory.

KUBLER: Yes. That book is very personal to him. It's his vision of Greek art, of Greek architecture, of Greek temple art, yes.

REESE: But I'm thinking specifically of the potential sources in the Yale faculty of his interests.

KUBLER: It's very much his book. It was very much his book.

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KUBLER: The thesis of the book [The Earth, the Temple, and the Gods by Vincent Scully] is contested by professional Hellenists.

REESE: Did the arrival of Vincent Scully bring about any change in how art history lecturing within the department was perceived? In other words, clearly the drama of Scully's lectures is something still remarked upon by many people.

KUBLER: Yes. The only person to match him is [Robert Ferris] Thompson. Thompson's lecturing style is perhaps related to Vincent's. Vincent's, however, and Thompson's are very different. Thompson's is very anecdotal and full of other performances--musical performances and so on. Vincent is pure Vincent.

REESE: Would you see any connection between Scully and [Henri] Focillon's style of lecturing, or are they very different?

KUBLER: Very different. Very different. The emotionality of Vincent's was absent from Focillon.

SMITH: In terms of your own personal involvement in selection of faculty-- For instance, someone whose focus is modern architecture, would you be very much involved in

that selection?

KUBLER: Would I be invited to have an opinion, you mean.

SMITH: Well, you probably would be invited to have an opinion, but would you have a strong opinion in any event? Would it be something that would be a field where you would feel that you had a need to express?

KUBLER: I don't think so, no. Modern architecture, I haven't spent enough time on it.

SMITH: So, in that sense, you would tend to defer to the colleagues who are--

KUBLER: Oh, I would defer, yes. I wouldn't expect to be on the committee.

SMITH: What about, say, approaches to scholarly works, scholarly writing? There is a range--

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: But would you be concerned about whether someone's writing was perhaps more literary than scholarly, than rigorous?

KUBLER: Well, I would be inclined to prefer to be consulted on works of rigorous scholarship.

REESE: The question I asked about Scully's lecture style was in following up discussion yesterday about the lost history of lecturing as a style, as a rhetorical form. I was wondering if you could recall other people who preceded Vincent Scully with whom this very dramatic

presentation was there? Or whether it's something really that was emerging, new in the profession?

KUBLER: There may be a tradition of it at Yale [University] in other departments, especially the English department with people like Chauncey Tinker. Chauncey Tinker's style is not unrelated to Vincent's. [laughter]

SMITH: For instance, would it be a factor in the selection of somebody--? Well, let's say Scully at the time.

KUBLER: It might be.

SMITH: That the art history department needs to get a little more visibility, and perhaps we need a lecturer with more flair?

KUBLER: It might be.

SMITH: Was it in that case, do you know?

KUBLER: I wasn't in on Vincent's promotion to professor. I was away, I think. It may very well be that he had become necessary.

SMITH: We've alluded to institutional politics before. That President [Charles] Seymour [Sr.] was very instrumental to the foundation of the department. Dean [Everett] Meeks. And the fact that there was some opposition and ongoing hostility from the classics department, anthropology. Perhaps another department was mentioned.

KUBLER: History.

SMITH: History, right. What happened with the art history department's relationship with central administration after Seymour was no longer president?

KUBLER: Well, the department is still very secure and not-- Demand for its services is not reduced. On the contrary, voluntary enrollment is increasing, so the department is needed, continuously needed.

SMITH: Was there ever any question of making art history classes mandatory? Part of the general requirements?

KUBLER: Well, it's always been among options, but never mandatory by itself in a separate category.

REESE: I'd like to come back just for a minute to Bob Thompson, because I know he has said to me in the past that you personally were responsible for encouraging him to come back into art history. Do you recall--? He had been an undergraduate at Yale [University] and then left and came back. Do you remember any of the specific--?

KUBLER: No, I don't. I don't remember this decision of his, but I remember him in seminar as a very valuable member of the class.

REESE: Did you direct his dissertation?

KUBLER: No, I don't think so. Perhaps. Yes, I think I followed it while he was writing it.

SMITH: So you were on his committee.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: But then his chair presumably would have been in anthropology?

KUBLER: No. He was appointed in history of art.

SMITH: Yeah, but I mean his--

KUBLER: He was never any part of anthropology.

SMITH: But his field is African art, correct?

KUBLER: Yes. But I don't believe the anthropologists would have him in their list. He has an enormous following among the undergraduates. He, like Scully.

SMITH: Who were some of the other faculty members whose recruitment you were particularly involved in? Where your opinion was a leading opinion in bringing the person to Yale?

KUBLER: Well, while I was chairman, I had that opportunity. But since being chairman, I've not had any such opportunities. [laughter]

SMITH: While you were chair, were there particular people that you wanted? You've mentioned Karl Lehmann.

KUBLER: Oh, yes, I was privy to many appointments, involved in accepting or quashing them. But I've forgotten the names and the case histories.

SMITH: Without necessarily mentioning names, in terms of the quashing, I would presume that anybody whose name would be suggested as a potential candidate would be,

certainly, in the upper levels of scholarship or would have a body of work that would be quite impressive to reach even the point where they would be considered for an appointment at Yale. So what would be the rationale--not so much in terms of the person, but in terms of the vision of the department--for deciding that somebody was not really suitable for the Yale department?

KUBLER: Well, lack of publication or inadequate publication. Publications that are inadequate.

SMITH: Even though they might be plentiful?

KUBLER: Even though they might be plentiful. The quality of publication would be first consideration. And I'm speaking, I think, for the department. And the promise as a teacher of equal importance.

SMITH: But in terms of publication and quality of publication, what I'm trying to get at-- Was there an underlying assumption or underlying cultural conception of Yale art history that would focus your attention on one scholar rather than another scholar? Even though their publications might both be equal in quantity and perhaps someone outside might say, "Well, they're both of equal scholarly value, though their approaches are different."

KUBLER: Well, as I remember-- And I haven't had any opportunity to have an opinion since retirement. But as I remember, the ideal profile was always that of being read

a lot and having a powerful presence as a lecturer.

SMITH: "Read a lot" would presume that there would be, for instance, certain journals--

KUBLER: There are books and articles enough to be a body of work.

SMITH: But would there be certain journals that would be more important than others?

KUBLER: Well, yes. Certainly Playboy would not be one. [laughter]

SMITH: Well, yes.

REESE: I'm afraid this might be a roller coaster ride and unfair, but I have tried from memory to put down some of the names of the people who were brought on to the Yale faculty during the fifties, a point in time where you were playing some important administrative roles. I wonder if you might say something about each. Just what you remember about them, their training. Bob [Robert] Herbert.

KUBLER: Yes. I was not in on that appointment.

REESE: Because he was trained at the Institute [of Fine Arts, New York University] I take it, and must have been an important appointment from outside the Yale faculty. George Hersey.

KUBLER: George Hersey's appointment I had nothing to do with.

REESE: William McDonald.

KUBLER: William McDonald I did, and that was very unfortunate. He was a classical scholar and quite a good one. I backed his appointment, and then he took offense at being denied promotion. He was brought into the lower rank. He took offense at being denied promotion, and he had the support of two others who also were going to have to wait a long time to be promoted. So they made a cabal, and the result was that they resigned.

SMITH: They were denied promotion by the faculty of the department?

KUBLER: By the faculty, yes.

SMITH: You had voted against promotion.

KUBLER: We voted against promotion.

REESE: If I recall, it was in conflict with the AAUP [American Association of University Professors] general guidelines about "six years up or out" that this was brought there on the Yale faculty.

KUBLER: That was it, yes.

REESE: Several faculty had been here that time. Therefore, there was--

KUBLER: Eligible, eligible for--

REESE: It was forced to either promote--

KUBLER: Or out, or get out, yes.

REESE: Or out, because of that external guideline.

KUBLER: Well, this was regarded as McDonald's work.

REESE: Jules Prown.

KUBLER: Jules Prown?

REESE: Did he come during the years when you were chair?

KUBLER: No, he was one of the more recent arrivals in the department and a very valuable member. He is.

The mention of McDonald brings up-- That was a very grave crisis for all of us, being deserted, in a way, by these valuable people, who if they had been more patient would have been promoted. There was a third one.

REESE: [Edgar] Munhall? [Nelson] Wu? [Spires] Kostoff?

KUBLER: Kostoff was one of the group. And then the most pathetic one was a baroque specialist.

REESE: Bill [William] Crelly.

KUBLER: Crelly suffered most from this episode. I had no part in this. After being chairman, I was privileged by not having any part in the internal affairs of the department. I was more and more on my own.

SMITH: The only thing I'd like to pursue on this--and I think we could wrap it up pretty quickly--is if there were any particular individuals that you initiated the recruitment of, that you had definitely wanted to bring to Yale.

KUBLER: No, I never did. I never did. My one attempt was Lehmann.

SMITH: Okay. We thought maybe we should get back to the postwar period, the immediate postwar period in the 1940s, and the time you had--

REESE: I'm thinking particularly about the study that you did with [G.] Evelyn Hutchinson on guano archaeology and how that project came about, how the collaboration with Hutchinson developed.

KUBLER: Well, I've known Hutchinson and talked with him a good deal about a variety of matters, and I wrote this paper without having consulted him. When I'd written it, I showed it to him. He pointed out things that I needed to know, and those were incorporated in the article. But I've always enjoyed his company.

SMITH: You had, as part of [The] Religious Architecture of New Mexico [in the Colonial Period and since the American Occupation (1940)], developed your dendrochronology.

KUBLER: Oh, yes, that was it.

SMITH: Now, ten years later you have the guano chronology. So during that period of time you seemed to be concerned about establishing some measure of dating things. Then it seems to stop being a major aspect of your work. Is that because you decided that absolute chronology was not as important?

KUBLER: Well, the case of the guano chronology is a case

in point. During the time I was concerned with that article and working out a scale for the Peruvian coast-- A time scale for the Peruvian coast, which proved to be the correct one. At that same time, the carbon-14 chronology was being worked out, and the carbon-14 chronology confirmed the guano chronology for the north coast of Peru. So that I was correct, but my method was not usable outside the coast of Peru, [laughter] whereas carbon-14 chronology is valuable worldwide.

SMITH: The need for absolute chronology still seems to be--

KUBLER: Absolute chronology is desirable.

SMITH: And we still lack absolute methods for the--?

KUBLER: Well, carbon 14 is it.

SMITH: Though, as I understand, in some of the southwest American artifacts you have dates that vary from 8,000 to 80,000 B.C. That's a pretty significant gap in terms of the conclusions you draw.

KUBLER: Depends on contamination.

SMITH: In terms of your own work, as your work shifted into the pre-Columbian work, where I suppose it would be more necessary, did you determine that you did not need to have absolute dating as much as you had before?

KUBLER: No, on the contrary, the more absolute dating that we can discover the better.

SMITH: In [The Art and Architecture of] Ancient America: [The Mexican, Maya, and Andean Peoples (1962)] you do present your own proposals about chronologies of things.

KUBLER: Oh, they're very-- My chronologies are based on existing work by others. They're not my work.

SMITH: Nonetheless, they were controversial conclusions that you drew.

KUBLER: Perhaps, but the chronologies are, as much as possible, reflections of proven cases.

REESE: The choice of the guano archaeology must have been determined by a need to date very specifically certain objects that fell within those things.

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: What were, for you, the most important artifacts that you were trying to date through that method?

KUBLER: It was pottery. Mochica pottery, which is produced over a long time for which the chronological position was floating. Nobody knew quite where to put it. The guano archaeology was a case of burial sites on one island where guano was a commercial product ever since the 1840s. Those stacks of guano are stratified, and the appearance of the potteries at different levels in the guano. So that the style can be dated by position in the guano, of which there are records of the great stacks as they were being exploited, for the agriculture of Europe

much more than for us.

REESE: Again, it was the earlier interest in Mochica pottery that you had originally, in fact, consulted [Alfred] Kroeber about.

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: It's interesting to me also, as we look at the density of projects, that you were involved in very different fields, from Aztec sculpture to calendars to ethnohistory in Peru to Mochica pottery. Could you say something about your scholarly habits of work? Do you work on one project at a time? Or do you keep several things simultaneously moving along? Have you thought at all about analyzing yourself in that way?

KUBLER: Usually, I am completely involved in whatever I'm writing and not attending to anything else. But I find that I come back to earlier articles and find good reasons for rewriting and amplifying and then enlarging them. So that in tending to do that more than writing new work--Revising the older work in the light of what's happened in the interval.

SMITH: Published older work or unpublished work?

KUBLER: Published work--published papers.

REESE: But generally the tendency is to do one project at a time.

KUBLER: I work on one thing at a time.

SMITH: But it did seem like in the forties you were working on Mexican Architecture [of the Sixteenth Century (1948)], Tovar Calendar--

KUBLER: Well, they're all at different stages of publication. That's the thing that makes them interfere with one another.

SMITH: And the two Peruvian books [The Indian Caste of Peru, 1795-1940: A Population Study Based upon Tax Records and Census Reports (1952) and Cuzco: Reconstruction of the Town and Restoration of Its Monuments (1951)] are of a different nature.

REESE: What about the relationship between your teaching and the ideas you have for research? Does the research precede the seminar or does the teaching sometimes produce a focus for the research, a complementary--?

KUBLER: Both ways. Preparing lectures often suggests topics for research, and teaching the material also suggests needs that can be worked on.

SMITH: Can you think of any particular studies that emerged out of your lectures?

KUBLER: Well, perhaps everything I've written has somehow been in the lectures, at least germinating.

SMITH: Germinating in the lectures. That is the distinction, I think, that we're trying to get out.

KUBLER: Yes, the teaching is the place where one has to

have something to say, and then having taught it, one can find more without teaching it.

REESE: I've always found in reading your work that there is something very dramatic about the idea of each article that often seems to start from some angle of vision that's unexpected. If we take the guano archaeology, it's not a subject that would occur to everyone. Was it looking at photographs of guano? What was the moment that captured your imagination?

KUBLER: I think that's-- Yes. I found, in my reading, a photograph of the 1850s of one of these huge stacks of guano, and I knew that there was pottery in there and that the records of that pottery showed that it had come from that island and probably in the vicinity of that stack. So I could proceed from there.

REESE: Did you see a certain humor from it as well?

KUBLER: Yes. [laughter]

REESE: What I'm asking is a serious question. Did the humor itself give you a certain amount of added energy?

KUBLER: Oh, yes. It induced me to go to the guano islands and experience the fragrance of the islands. [laughter]

REESE: I don't want to get too far afield from Richard, but since we're talking about research methods, if it is okay I'd like to ask if you have noted, in the time that

you've spent working on scholarly research, changes in your own working methods. I'm thinking not merely about the compilation of data, but the actual writing. I mean, do you divide research from writing in a very rigorous way?

KUBLER: Oh, very much so. Research is extensive and writing is intensive. It's a different operation bringing it together. What to write becomes evident only during research.

REESE: So it's a fascination--

KUBLER: And then writing points to lacunae in the research, and one has to go back over the material again.

REESE: Can you describe your own process of beginning to research a subject? I know it's hard to generalize about everything because each phase is distinct, but--

KUBLER: It's usually reading everything I get my hands on and expanding the area of literature that I can discover that's relevant. And then having collected that and thinking about it, a plan of writing emerges and I try to write it.

REESE: At what point does the definition of the problem emerge? Is it prior to the research, generally, that you fix upon what the problem is?

KUBLER: No, the problem emerges from the research. But there has to be a decision that the research is going to

be profitable.

SMITH: I guess I'm puzzled about how the problem can emerge in the research. Because how can you do the research--?

KUBLER: It hasn't been done. Well, those are intuitions of profitability. Is this going to be worth the while? Is this going to be worth my while?

SMITH: Does that mean that you attempt to approach the raw material with a clean mind, in the sense of no clear predispositions?

KUBLER: I guess that this is going to be profitable.

SMITH: But you don't go into it with an idea of what the problem might likely be.

KUBLER: Well, sometimes. Sometimes the problem is visible. But sometimes it's elusive. One has to dig it out. But it's there intuitively. Intuitively there is something there. That was the case with the guano archaeology.

SMITH: Well, let's take Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century. When you started that book, how well formulated was the problem at the beginning?

KUBLER: Probably the formulation by Robert Ricard was the start of that book, and I benefited greatly from Ricard's treatment.

SMITH: In the Tovar Calendar did the problem emerge in

the course of doing the research or--?

KUBLER: There are models for that sort of study. One can follow an accepted model and depart from it. The use of the article is in departing from the model, so very often there is a model from which one departs.

REESE: Do you generally write from an outline? Do you structure--? Once you've completed your research, do you envision a structure and then write?

KUBLER: There is a point when I can't find anything more to read. That's about the time that I see the outline of what can be said.

REESE: Could you talk about the writing process for you? Do you write for long periods of time, short periods of time? Is it the pen?

KUBLER: When I'm writing I do nothing else. I try to be economical rather than verbose.

SMITH: You say you do nothing else, but at the same time you have to teach. So how would you balance the demands of teaching and the demands of writing?

KUBLER: Well, I just go and teach.

SMITH: Because you have your lecture notes already prepared, you have your repertoire in hand, as it were?

KUBLER: I can always review the previous notes.

REESE: Do you have habits of writing morning, evening, all through the day?

KUBLER: In the writing mode it's all the time, all the time that's available. Just write it until it's written.

REESE: And you've always written in longhand?

KUBLER: Yes. I don't like typing because I can't hear the words, I'm hearing the typing. But longhand, with a no. 2 pencil, I can hear my words--how they fit and where they're repetitious, where they're excessive, where they don't sound well.

REESE: Is writing an enjoyable activity for you?

KUBLER: Very, very. I enjoy it. I always enjoy it, because I try not to write until I'm ready to say something. Like writing letters--you write them when you have to.

REESE: Do you spend much time with dictionaries at all when you--?

KUBLER: Oh, yes, yes, and thesaurus, Roget--alternate expressions.

REESE: Have you thought at all, both when you write and when you read others, about art history as literature? Art history as a language which can be-- You know, something that is distinct from other forms of writing.

KUBLER: I think a lot about its being readable and interesting. Will this be interesting, and how could I make it interesting?

SMITH: Interesting to whom?

KUBLER: Well, to my idea of a reader, of a reader who is very much like me, who would be satisfied by what I am doing. [laughter] In other words, it's a personage. The reader is a personage of no determined characterstics, excepting that he's rather like you, the writer.

REESE: Yesterday, or two days ago, Richard touched briefly on your reading habits, but that was specifically as an undergraduate. When you think about your own writing about history-- Could you say something about other art historians who write in a way that has some of the qualities that you particularly enjoy? Not that they write like you, but write in a style that has a quality that you liked.

KUBLER: Oh, yes. I can think of many, and in different fields. For example, the writing of [André] Leroi-Gourhan in Les mots et les choses is delightful to me.

REESE: How about [Michel] Foucault or--?

KUBLER: Leroi-Gourhan. It's a book of his called Les mots et les choses. I think it's in two volumes.

SMITH: [Claude] Lévi-Strauss?

KUBLER: Lévi-Strauss, yes. I've never taken Leroi-Gourhan as a model or Robert Ricard as a model, but I admire their method and their use of language.

SMITH: What about English-language art historians?

KUBLER: [Erwin] Panofsky was very good in English.

SMITH: As a stylist.

KUBLER: Better than in German--much better than in German. His German is less elegant.

REESE: I think particularly Panofsky's correspondence, where there are brilliant pieces of humor.

KUBLER: Oh, he's such a wit, such a wit.

REESE: I think of some of your twists of ideas with humor.

TAPE NUMBER: VII, SIDE TWO

MARCH 29, 1991

SMITH: In line with this is the work with publishers and editors, and their influence, if any, on the subjects you've chosen or the way in which you write.

KUBLER: I would say it's very little. I never had to rewrite a lot for a publisher and I've never written anything on demand from a publisher excepting in the case of the Pelican books. In all my relations with publishers they've always been pacific--yes, peaceful. I've never had any quarrels with publishers. When they've accepted what I've written, it doesn't have to be changed very much. I never had any of that fighting with publishers, and I've never expected my works to sell widely, so I never had conflict with publishers on the commercial side either. I take their terms.

SMITH: With the Pelican series, in some respects that was a commercial venture. Maybe you didn't look at it that way, but I know that [Nikolaus] Pevsner did.

KUBLER: It certainly was for the publisher.

SMITH: Did that influence--?

KUBLER: But I never felt that the Pevsner series was a commercial series. It was, but it wasn't for me.

SMITH: Are there editors that you worked with over a long

period of time?

KUBLER: I've worked with Yale [University] Press for a long time, but their editors change a lot. I don't remember owing a debt to a publisher for literary questions.

SMITH: I wasn't thinking so much of a debt as just a--

KUBLER: Occasionally a journal editor will make very useful suggestions with which I agree, but I don't depend upon editing, as I think some people do.

SMITH: Have you concerned yourself at all about developments of publishing trends within the art historical field and whether they were an expansion or a contraction of topics or approaches over periods of time?

KUBLER: No, I haven't thought about it much, but I'm always glad that when I need a publisher, there's one for the article or the book without too much waiting.

SMITH: Aside from the Pelican series, you have not started a book knowing who the publisher would be up front?

KUBLER: Oh, yes. I often have without knowing who the publisher would be, and it would turn out to be Yale Press. [laughter]

REESE: In relationship to the question about your reading habits, we've talked about the way you do a subject. Do you continue to read fiction avidly, as you did in your

undergraduate years, and do you find any play between, you know, your reading of literary fiction and your work?

KUBLER: No. I think that sort of interplay is rather more in technical subjects such as anthropological studies. An anthropological study is often food for thought, or a mathematical paper can be food for thought. But fiction, poetry are rarely suggestive of material that I would like to pursue further. I generally get it from books by other people on technical subjects.

REESE: I remember one time you were commenting that you'd read a great deal of Henry James at this point and of Thomas Mann at another. Do you still pursue that kind of reading? I'm talking about since the fifties.

KUBLER: I've read less and less fiction. I've read more and more in technical studies of one kind and another.

SMITH: Perhaps continuing on this trend, or away from the fiction and poetry, would be your self-education or your reading in general intellectual movements in the postwar periods. And the most obvious one would be existentialism. Could you--?

KUBLER: Yes. I'm on the edge of it, but I never get deeply involved.

SMITH: Did you read Sartre and--?

KUBLER: Yes, and Foucault.

SMITH: What about phenomenology and Husserl, Heidegger?

KUBLER: I'm not deeply versed in those authors, but I'm aware of what they're doing.

SMITH: [Hans-Georg] Gadamer or [Jürgen] Habermas?

KUBLER: I know of them, but I'm not a student of them.

SMITH: These philosophical schools have not been important in terms of provoking your thoughts.

KUBLER: Not directly. I get them indirectly and in a fragmentary way.

SMITH: In the fifties there was a whole explosion of interest in holistic psychology: Erich Fromm, the Gestalt movement. Did you--?

KUBLER: I was aware of it.

SMITH: Again, but not deeply.

KUBLER: Yes. But not deeply.

SMITH: You would not have been--

KUBLER: Not investing in it.

SMITH: You would have not assigned any of these texts as ancillary readings.

KUBLER: I don't think so. I don't think so, no.

SMITH: What about in the field of linguistic semiotics?

KUBLER: There I have dabbled more.

SMITH: But are you familiar with the Prague school? With [Jan] Mukařovský?

KUBLER: When the topic comes to me, I'm much more engaged

in it than when I no longer need it.

SMITH: I raise this partly because these are not things that appear in your footnotes, but one wonders if you've been reading these things.

KUBLER: I know of them and I've dabbled in them, but I've never invested in them deeply.

SMITH: You mentioned yesterday that you began to think less of Kroeber's work. I was wondering if you could specify more when that occurred. Was it a change in you or was it a change in Kroeber? Or both.

KUBLER: I think it was a change in Kroeber. Kroeber's early work is more impressive than his later work, which was the work on which his reputation was built, when he became interested in world history without the necessary equipment. He was citing historians instead of writing history.

SMITH: Are you talking about Configuration of Culture?

KUBLER: Yes. The late books are unconvincing.

SMITH: So would this be stuff that he was already writing by the time you met him?

KUBLER: No. When I knew him it was not long before his death. But his later work is just less thoroughly grounded than his early work. His early work is very thoroughly grounded.

SMITH: When did you begin to start reading the works of

Lévi-Strauss and the structuralist anthropologists?

KUBLER: Oh, I would say in the forties, fifties.

SMITH: Were you familiar with the work of [Maurice] Merleau-Ponty or Marcel Mauss?

KUBLER: Marcel Mauss, yes. Merleau-Ponty, less.

SMITH: Well, I know you have criticisms of Lévi-Strauss. I wonder if you could outline them for us. I mean, for instance, do you find the binary method convincing?

KUBLER: Yes. But not useful.

SMITH: Not useful. Because of the level of generality?

KUBLER: Yes. I wouldn't say that I need Lévi-Strauss. [laughter] I have used him, but I haven't needed him.

SMITH: I was going to say, are you familiar with the controversy between Lévi-Strauss and [Edmund] Leach?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: How did you interpret that? Did you draw any conclusions?

KUBLER: I would stay with Lévi-Strauss.

REESE: In an earlier conversation that we had, you were talking about scholarship that has a spark of life to it, that breathes. When you read Lévi-Strauss or Leroi-Gourhan or Foucault, is it to use it or to find the person and their mind?

KUBLER: I think the latter. I think it's the latter--find the mind, find the configuration and use what I can.

SMITH: The whole of a culture as a structure that Lévi-Strauss outlines in various places, for instance in Tristes Tropiques, where he takes the three Indian societies in Brazil with similar artistic motifs, but shows how the meanings of these motifs are fundamentally different because of their position in the structural formation, is that something that you could apply to the Mesoamerican situation?

KUBLER: I haven't needed it. But the Mesoamerican situation is an archaeological situation rather than an ethnological one. And Lévi-Strauss is more an ethnologist than an archaeologist.

SMITH: But still, wouldn't a conclusion from his position be that the jaguar image or the serpent image, even though it appears in all these different cultures, must have different meanings, because you have to locate it in a whole different social structure?

REESE: What about the Frankfurt school, [Walter] Benjamin and others? Were you conversant with that?

KUBLER: No, I did not know Benjamin.

REESE: And the French, [Jean] Baudrillard--?

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: You did mention Foucault. Is there some particular aspect of Foucault that you found intriguing?

KUBLER: I'm not in him now. [laughter] I'd have to go

back.

SMITH: I know this is skipping ahead, but when you mention somebody like Foucault or [Jacques] Derrida or Baudrillard, I begin to think of graduate students from the seventies on who are going to insist on doing their topics within a Foucauldian framework or a Derridean framework. Did that happen to you?

KUBLER: Never.

SMITH: Never.

KUBLER: Excepting, possibly, Focillon.

SMITH: But in terms of your own graduate students, there was never an insisting on using poststructuralist methodologies?

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: Is that because the students who wanted to would have known enough to go to somebody else?

KUBLER: Yes, they would have. Actually, the art historian does not need a literary theory that badly. It's not a necessity.

SMITH: No, it's not a necessity, but there are plenty of books being written which-- What about feminist theory?

KUBLER: Well, I'm certainly in favor of women.

SMITH: But in terms of your own readings, has feminist theory influenced your thinking about the societies you studied or the artwork?

KUBLER: I'm aware of feminist aspirations and sympathetic with them, but I haven't spent any time reading about it.

SMITH: And again, in terms of your students, would there be students who would want to use feminist theory to interpret the art that they want to study?

KUBLER: I haven't had any students for eight years.

SMITH: And before then?

KUBLER: Before then, I have taught many women, and always as human beings rather than as women.

SMITH: Well, let's go back to the Peru experiences which were discussed a little bit yesterday. You had some further questions that you wanted to ask on Peru.

REESE: I just wanted to review a little bit how the request for you to go to Peru came about, and then just a little bit about your remembrances of travel, of conditions, of friends, of scholars you met there.

KUBLER: Yes. Well, it was commissioned by the Smithsonian [Institution] through an agency that then existed for Latin America. The assignment was to teach at [University of] San Marcos and to teach whatever was needed after consultation with the authorities at San Marcos. I think I said yesterday when we arrived it was at the outbreak of a revolution when [Manuel A.] Odría came to power and the university was closed. So I arranged with the university to teach in the house we had

rented.

SMITH: Had you gone down there intending to teach an art history course?

KUBLER: I went with instruction to consult with San Marcos about what they wanted me to teach, which I did.

REESE: What was your sense of economic and social conditions at that point, in the late forties, in South America?

KUBLER: Well, I could speak for Peru, and I visited Colombia on a research matter. Peru, even though it was in military hands from the day of our arrival, was peaceful, excepting for the slaughter of about three thousand persons in a cannonade on the day of the revolution in the harbor city of Callao. Otherwise, it was bloodless. Odría was in full authority, and the streets were patrolled and there was a toque de queda--one had to be indoors at dusk. The city was quiet, but the university was closed.

REESE: You were then living in the house of Alex Ciurlizza?

KUBLER: No.

REESE: That was later.

KUBLER: No. We hired a house not far from Alex Ciurlizza in San Isidro.

REESE: Did you take a number of trips to Cuzco and to

other important--?

KUBLER: We did. We did with students. Betty [Elizabeth Bushnell Kubler] doesn't like high altitudes, and I went to Cuzco on my own because of the altitude. But she did come with us to Ayacucho and Huamanga and that region, which we did in conjunction with a young anthropologist, José Matos, who is now distinguished for his studies of the barriadas of Lima, which he's made a lifework of, and he's known the world over for it.

REESE: Where did you travel in Colombia?

KUBLER: We went to Bogotá to look for the work of an eighteenth-century bishop, Martínez de Compañon.

REESE: And did you go to Tunja?

KUBLER: No, only up river to one of the colonial cities of great beauty.

REESE: Tunja Popayán?

KUBLER: Popayán, up to the Magdalena River.

REESE: In that period did you visit Arequipa or Catamarca?

KUBLER: Oh, yes, we were in those cities. We traveled in Peru. I traveled some in Colombia.

REESE: Did you go also into Bolivia, into La Paz?

KUBLER: No.

REESE: Were you seeing equally pre-Columbian and colonial sites along the road?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: When you go to a site for the first time, do you have a procedure for how you look at it?

KUBLER: Depends on one's time, of course, and at no time did I have opening for any sustained work at any site. It was always brief visits to cities and places and sites, but never any extended work. The only extended work that was done was what I mentioned with the demographic question.

SMITH: When you go to a site, is there any procedure that you follow in terms of examining it? Do you try to take notes of any sort?

KUBLER: Well, I ordinarily would prepare an agenda. But with these short visits, one went to get the general layout and get the sense of the condition of the ruins, and that's all one can do in a brief visit. One can't pretend to do anything serious in two days. [laughter]

SMITH: Would you take any rough measurements, if only to confirm previous measurements?

KUBLER: If there were details that were of interest and measurements were necessary, I would do so. If I saw some interesting vessels in a local collection, I would photograph them and measure.

SMITH: Color photographs or black and white?

KUBLER: At that time it was still black and white. Color

wasn't so abundantly used. It wasn't so easily available.

REESE: Did you find conditions in Peru significantly different from those in Mexico? I'm thinking of research conditions.

KUBLER: I was much impressed with the respect of the Peruvians for historical matters and the presence of historians in every community. History is revered in Peru. History is part of the national character. They respect history.

REESE: I know Luis Valcarcel was working on this project with you indirectly.

KUBLER: He was head of an institute where José Matos was the younger person. It was an institute without many members, but much respected, and Luis Valcarcel was much respected. But José Matos was the younger man, and Valcarcel was already rather old.

REESE: Did you have the sense of being really alone among North Americans, or did you find colleagues in the field? John Rowe and--

KUBLER: There were many people in the field, and one looked them up when knowing of them. In Lima, they were of help. But really in Lima, owing to these political conditions, we were left very much alone, and the students rejoiced in having a course to go to. [laughter]

SMITH: How long did the university remain closed?

KUBLER: Oh, for a couple of years or more.

REESE: I know there were also difficult times because Betty became ill.

KUBLER: Betty was ill, yes. She had Ménière's disease, which was a disease of the inner ear. Appalling vertigo, for which she was hospitalized. The Ciurlizzas helped with our children, looking to the servants and so on and so forth. We had plenty of help in the house.

REESE: Were you writing during the time you were there on other matters on any of the other books?

KUBLER: While I was writing on this demographic report as we did it, it took several months. We worked on it for three or four months. So we collected all the data, and then it had to be processed.

SMITH: Your second extended trip to Peru came with the Cuzco earthquake.

KUBLER: Yes. That was for UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization].

SMITH: How did that develop as an assignment for you?

KUBLER: Well, I was chief of mission, and there were Peruvians assigned to me. We entered every house in Cuzco and wrote a report on it, which I signed.

SMITH: How did it develop that UNESCO came to you to be the chief of mission? Were there any particular art historical connections involved with that?

KUBLER: I don't know how that happened. The person to whom I was responsible at UNESCO was a Belgian, a Belgian with a Flemish name, van der Hagen. I think he was in charge of South American matters, cultural affairs with Peru. And I reported to him, to van der Hagen. How he knew of me I don't know, but probably from San Marcos and people who had known me in Peru.

REESE: How soon after the earthquake did you arrive and how much time did you actually spend?

KUBLER: Wasn't it '51? It was fairly soon after the earthquake. I think the earthquake was in the winter, the previous winter. We arrived not long after. It was a party of several. There were two Peruvians, and then there were local persons in Cuzco on a list. As I said, we went into every building and checked in person, and measurements and photographs. We had a photographer, a Cuzco photographer, excellent person.

REESE: Who was he?

KUBLER: I've forgotten his name, but he was very good company, very jovial.

SMITH: Did your report then lead to sufficient funds being directed into Cuzco?

KUBLER: A report was published. It is quite a handsome publication of Cuzco. I don't know if you've seen it.

SMITH: No, I haven't.

KUBLER: But in it we made very specific recommendations covering three points, of which the Peruvians complied with one, which was the restoration of the churches. But we also recommended the building of a belt highway cutting Cuzco out of the highway traffic of that valley, so that it could resist the development of Cuzco that was happening, and isolating the center from that peripheral development. That was not observed. Then we recommended that they introduce into Peru some of the new adobe techniques that were being elaborated in the Southwest [United States] and California, adobe construction which in earthquake is surprisingly resistant. To be aware of all that new technology of adobe, which had a chemical aspect, too. That recommendation was ignored, but they did restore the churches as requested, and extensively. They followed all our recommendations [regarding the churches], but ignored the others.

REESE: Do you remember where you stayed and how long you were there?

KUBLER: We were in a hotel on the main square, a very pleasant city hotel. We were lodged there. And I had a counterpart who was an architect in Cuzco.

REESE: It must have provided occasions in which men entered convents and other female institutions for the first time.

KUBLER: Exactly. I was particularly taken with the mother superior of Saint Clair nuns--Santa Clara nuns. She was a remarkable woman, a great personality. But I wasn't supposed to be there. [laughter] I was there only by orders of the city government.

REESE: Was Wendell Bennett--? I'm trying to think of the associates you had in Peruvian studies who would have been important colleagues and contacts during those years. Bennett clearly.

KUBLER: Bennett, [William] Duncan Strong. Duncan Strong and I went to the guano islands together. Duncan Strong was quite an important archaeologist, and his company was very pleasant.

REESE: Now, is that on the trip to Lima or the Cuzco--?

KUBLER: I think that was during our second trip to Cuzco, to check a second time, in '53.

SMITH: When you came to Peru in '48, were you beginning to think of what you might write about Indian civilizations and their art and architecture?

KUBLER: Yes. I'd been teaching Peruvian history and archaeology from an art historical point of view.

SMITH: At that point, how did you view the relationship of Mesoamerican and Andean historiography? Not the civilizations, but the historiography.

KUBLER: If I understand you, the character of the

historical writing of the two areas?

SMITH: And the degree to which you felt comfortable about what was in print to pass on to the students.

KUBLER: I think the literature on Andean archaeology was less mature than that of Mesoamerica.

SMITH: So much less had been done of the--

KUBLER: Less had been done, and the older works were ninteenth-century, or twentieth-century works in ninteenth-century manner--as travel books more than as archaeological works. So that Peruvian archaeology was distinctly behind the archaeology of the Mexicans.

SMITH: Did this in any way emerge out of the respective positions of the governments and the funds that they were able to commit?

KUBLER: I think so. Peru is not a large population. I think it's ten million, and Mexico is three times that. Mexico has more resources and more tradition for it. Oddly Peru respects historical studies, including archaeology, even more than in Mexico, but they have produced less archaeological writing.

REESE: I'm trying to think of whether other key figures--John Rowe you said you have known.

KUBLER: John Rowe I've known. I knew him in New Haven. And John Rowe is a perennial visitor to Peru. He's now in California at [University of California] Berkeley.

REESE: And was [John] Murra already--?

KUBLER: Murra was already in place in Peru. We were friendly. Gordon Ekholm was more an ethnologist, but he was also an archaeologist from the American Museum of Natural History. And I saw a good deal of him, too, Gordon Ekholm.

SMITH: One of the things, as I was reading this afternoon-- The diffusion theories seem to have a sudden emergence into prominence in the conference in 1949. Did you attend that conference?

KUBLER: Yes. Wasn't that in Paris?

SMITH: It didn't say, actually. It just says International Conference of Anthropologists.

KUBLER: International Congress of Americanists.

SMITH: Americanists, okay.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: What was the state of diffusion theories before that conference? How did you respond to the sudden burst of enthusiasm for these kinds of explanations?

KUBLER: Well, diffusion theory begins in the sixteenth century with discovery and the conquest. It was regularly assumed for the next three centuries that Amerindian populations were from Asia and that the diffusion had happened in preconquest time. Then the archaeological view--archaeological and anthropological view--came to be

quite the contrary to that received opinion of the colonial era. Late nineteenth-century archaeologists began to question the diffusion theory and to end up, really, with the contrary, that there had been no connection with Asia since before the great melt of the Ice Age, which then was taken to be about 10,000 B.C. Now it seems maybe 12,000 B.C., beginning about 12,000 B.C. The present status of the question in the minds of orthodox anthropologists is still that any Asiatic connections are very old and broken at the time of the Ice Age, but not resumed after the Ice Age.

SMITH: But in '49 there's a sudden efflorescence, beginning with this conference. Do you recall who the individuals were that were promoting the diffusionist thesis at that conference and why?

KUBLER: The remaining diffusionists were not many in number. They were a minority. I can't remember, but they were in disgrace.

SMITH: Even at that time?

KUBLER: Even at that time.

SMITH: It seems from looking at--

KUBLER: And diffusionists are still.

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, SIDE ONE

MARCH 29, 1991

KUBLER: I sided with those who believed in the breaking of contact with Asia.

SMITH: But the position seemed to have enough credibility that it had to be responded to in a credible, scholarly manner.

KUBLER: Yes. It had to, yes.

SMITH: Then I noted that in the early sixties, the enthusiasm for diffusion theories evaporated as rapidly as it had come up again. Do you have an explanation for why discussion stopped again?

KUBLER: I wasn't aware of it as having had a revival. The only thing I have in mind is the book I showed you, Werner Müller on diffusion taking place in the Arctic Circle during the Ice Age, which is a new idea.

SMITH: That's a more recent book, though.

KUBLER: Yes. That's a recent book.

SMITH: We could go on to the contact that you had with Nikolaus Pevsner and the commissions to write the two new books.

KUBLER: Well, I had met him at meetings, and he wrote me to consider the first book, which was-- Wasn't it colonial art?

SMITH: Yes, colonial.

KUBLER: The colonial book [Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and Their American Dominions, 1500 to 1800 (1959)]. I think that that was the more difficult book to write of the two. The second one [The Art and Architecture of Ancient America: The Mexican, Maya, and Andean Peoples (1962)] I was better prepared for at that time. The first book needed a lot of work, yes. Needed a lot of work that I hadn't done.

SMITH: I noted that in the preface you comment that initially the book was to cover a longer period of time and to be more global in scope, to look at Spain and Portugal's Asian and African colonies as well. Was that Pevsner's conception?

KUBLER: Well, he never intervened. He always allowed me to do as I pleased.

SMITH: In terms of the relationship between you and Martin Soria-- The two sections or the three sections are divided between the two of you. Did you have much interaction?

KUBLER: Not much. Not much. He was working mostly in Spain or in Michigan, where he was at East Lansing [Michigan State University]. We worked very amiably together with very little conflict. He didn't want to do the architecture, and he confined himself to the painting

and sculpture and crafts. So that the division of labor was mutually acceptable--no conflict.

SMITH: So once you had determined what the actual parameters of the book would be, then the two of you could work completely independently.

KUBLER: Oh, yes, yes. And he was in Spain a lot at that time.

REESE: I'm trying to clarify the chronology, too, because I believe in one of the introductions you say that in 1947 he had written to you or spoken to you about doing the volumes. But then you leave in '48 and '49 for San Marcos in Peru. Then you're back in '50. You go again to Cuzco in '51. Do you remember when you really began plotting the writing or the kind of research? Did you break it up into segments in terms of focusing your energies?

KUBLER: Are we speaking about the pre-Columbian book?

REESE: Yes. I actually remember two stories. One was that you at one time mentioned to me that Pevsner had wanted a volume that covered pre-Columbian and Latin American and Spain. That you had tried to make him understand that that was simply too much for any single book to hold, and therefore it became something--

KUBLER: You reminded me of something I forgot to say. Yes, that did happen. There was that original hope on Pevsner's part to get more into the volume than actually

happened.

SMITH: Then the two books and the summaries, from Pevsner's point of view, were commissioned at the same time.

KUBLER: No. I rather persuaded him after the appearance of the first book to commission the second book.

SMITH: But you said you had written a first draft of the second book in '51, '52, which was then later discarded. But that was written before Pevsner asked you to write the volume?

KUBLER: Yes. The draft of it existed, but it was a short draft. It wasn't a text.

SMITH: At that point, you were not writing it specifically for the Pelican series.

KUBLER: No. It was in my lectures. It was in my courses, and I dredged it out of my courses, really, and amplified it with other material.

SMITH: I have a note here that Walter Cook had been a central figure in-- Well, actually, what I want to do is then also divide this book from the Ars Hispaniae book [Arquitectura de los siglos XVII y XVIII]. Are they basically the same?

KUBLER: Ars Hispaniae is shorter.

SMITH: But same content?

KUBLER: Less scope, but more development of many parts.

SMITH: So Walter Cook had arranged the commission for that particular work, and the commission for that came after Pevsner had asked you and Soria to write [the Pelican volume].

KUBLER: That's right.

SMITH: So it's a book that's dependent--

KUBLER: It's dependent on the Pevsner volume.

SMITH: But restructured for the Spanish audience.

KUBLER: It was restructured, yes.

REESE: The editor of the Ars Hispaniae series was José Gudiol.

KUBLER: Gudiol, yes.

REESE: Who you knew through--

KUBLER: Through Walter Cook. And I knew him in Spain, also.

SMITH: How much research had you done in Spain prior to beginning the drafting of this book or the writing of this book, the research for this particular book?

KUBLER: Not much. Not much. We traveled all over Spain in preparation for these works.

SMITH: Did the publishers provide adequate funding to do the research?

KUBLER: No. I was on leave. I had a Guggenheim or something like that. We traveled and photographed.

REESE: Do you remember the year and situation of the

first trip to Spain, the extended research for the Ars Hispaniae volume?

KUBLER: Yes.

REESE: It was early fifties.

KUBLER: When did that come out?

REESE: It came out in '57.

KUBLER: 'Fifty-seven.

REESE: I have that you were commissioned to do it in 1953 by Gudiol, but I can't remember the year in which you and Betty [Elizabeth Bushnell Kubler] were in Barcelona.

KUBLER: That would have been in the forties, yes. We started in the forties. We had our youngest child [Elena Ann Kubler] with us, who was very small then. She was born in '46, so that traveling was in '48. I remember doing a lot of writing on the road and in hotels. SMITH: At this time what was the state of funding sources for scholars doing work in Latin American or Iberian studies? Were there places one could comfortably go to get reasonable-size grants for art history work?

KUBLER: I never had trouble getting funding for those outings. Guggenheim I think I had three times. Then there's another one, the American Council of Learned Societies. Between those I had financial help on most of my research trips.

SMITH: Was funding becoming more and more available at

this period? More easily accessible for research in these particular fields?

KUBLER: I think so. I think it was more available than now, perhaps.

REESE: I have here that you had Guggenheim grants in 1952 and '53 and then again in 1956 and '57, which were used in the writing and research.

KUBLER: That's right. I used part of that in Belgium, where I was looking for Portuguese material.

REESE: They were also very busy years, because the Arensberg catalog [The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection II: Pre-Columbian Sculpture] came out in 1954 and the catalogs of the [Alan] Würtzburger [The Würtzburger Collection of Pre-Columbian Art] and [Fred] Olsen [Olsen Collection of Pre-Columbian Art] collections in 1958. Those were also years where-- If I recall, you were chair of the department in the fifties. So it was--

KUBLER: Busy time. So busy that I've forgotten it. [laughter]

SMITH: In terms of the ancient America volume, then, really the commission for that came from Pevsner in '58, '59?

KUBLER: At my suggestion. I don't think he would have included ancient America without my suggestion.

SMITH: How was Pevsner to work with?

KUBLER: Oh, very pleasant. Very agreeable and long-suffering.

SMITH: Did he make clear what he needed in terms of the series format and requirements?

KUBLER: Well, he would expect his authors to consult the series and to behave accordingly, which I did. I took most of my instructions from previous volumes in the series and modeled the volume on the series as it had already appeared. I don't think he was very good at close direction of each volume. He left you alone.

SMITH: So again, as with your other work, you did not have significant revisions, except what you determined for yourself.

KUBLER: Pretty much. Matters of style, of printer's style.

REESE: I think perhaps the most useful way for us to proceed would be to focus on a place rather than the chronology, because it's so interlocking at this point in time. I wonder about your recollections about the travel in Spain. You centered yourself in Barcelona?

KUBLER: We were in Barcelona in the fall, in the autumn, and into the winter. In the winter we went down to the Málaga coast for the child. We had the child, our youngest, with us. Then we traveled constantly when the good weather came. We went all over Spain.

SMITH: Of the buildings that you discuss in that volume, how many did you see yourself?

KUBLER: I would hesitate to think that I saw more than 20 percent of them.

SMITH: So, largely, you are relying on the extant literature.

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: I mean, the question of writing a synthesis is sometimes controversial in academia, but these are a little bit more substantial than many syntheses.

KUBLER: Well, the same is true of Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century [1948]. I did not see all the buildings mentioned in that volume, but I was able to speak with authority about them because I had plans and drawings from government sources, so that one can mention buildings one hasn't seen.

SMITH: In the Spanish and Portuguese volume you are, again, relying on primary source material rather than other historians?

KUBLER: I think so. Yes.

REESE: I'm again thinking of Barcelona and friends there. What can you say about them? Gudiol, Montserrat Blanc.

KUBLER: We knew Gudiol and Montserrat Blanc, of course, in the Arquiv Mas relationship. And Montserrat was the wife of a very--

REESE: Santiago Alcolea.

KUBLER: Santiago Alcolea. Santiago Alcolea was a great help. We saw a great deal of him and traveled with him occasionally. That connection with Arquiv Mas and the Instituto Amatller-- Instituto Amatller eventually bought Mas and owns Mas at the present day. So that was a wonderful place to do studies in architecture, in the Instituto Amatller, which had the duplicate file of Arquiv Mas. So I could prepare travels in the library of Instituto Amatller.

REESE: How about the Madrid, the Castilla, region? Who were the personalities?

KUBLER: Well, there again, it was Diego Angulo and the library of the Instituto Diego Velázquez, which was quite good. But not as good as Amatller.

REESE: Could you give a kind of sketch of Angulo as you remember him?

KUBLER: He was very taciturn. He spoke very little, but when he spoke it was with authority.

REESE: How would you describe your relationship with Angulo over the years?

KUBLER: We were friends. He was an older friend and helpful, very helpful. He would always give me an introduction if I needed it.

REESE: Could you give a similar sketch of Gudiol?

KUBLER: Gudiol was more commercial. More on the commercial side. He was deeply involved with Arquiv Mas. He was not so distinctly academic as Diego Angulo. Diego Angulo was pure professor, and Gudiol was more a businessman.

REESE: Other art and architectural historians in Madrid? Fernando Chueca?

KUBLER: Chueca we saw a lot of. We've always been close friends with Chueca, and I greatly admired his work.

REESE: Can you say something about the tradition within which he wrote?

KUBLER: It's more the belles-lettres tradition of interesting essays. His first major book was really an essay, a very brilliant and stimulating essay, which I later discounted, but profited from after first reading. Invariantes castizos: [el arquitectura española], isn't that the title?

REESE: Yes. Were there other people who were particularly influential for you? Not only in the field of art, but literature in Spain at that time.

KUBLER: We had friends in Madrid and in Barcelona. In Barcelona we were almost adopted by a family with many artists in it. So they took us with them in their social lives in Barcelona, which is very pleasant. That family was Llimona, a family of artists. José Llimona.

REESE: Then in Madrid?

KUBLER: In Madrid we had the pleasure of being lodged at the residencia del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones. That was a whole society of scholars and professors and just the right place to be whenever you wanted to know something. You'd find the thread right there at the residencia. And we've always used it going back to Madrid.

SMITH: Were there social or intellectual historians of Spain that you turned to to get contacts? Whose work did you find the most useful and meaningful?

KUBLER: Probably Chueca, Fernando Chueca. I didn't think like him, but he knew the material so well. And we traveled with him.

SMITH: As you were working on this book, did you come to new conceptualizations of Spanish architecture?

KUBLER: I think so.

SMITH: For yourself?

KUBLER: For myself, yes. And they're in the book.

REESE: Were there *tertulias* as well as--?

KUBLER: Yes. Oh, yes. We were in the *tertulia* Trés Café on Alcalá--Café León. And it was the *tertulia* of a very congenial man of letters. He would gather scholars at the *tertulia*. We were regular attendants at the *tertulia*, benefited greatly from that. There was a priest who was

keeper of manuscripts in the Biblioteca nacional, very useful. They were all useful.

REESE: Rodríguez Moñino?

KUBLER: Rodríguez Moñino was the host. How did you know the name?

REESE: Because you had written an essay in homenaje to him.

KUBLER: Yes. It was Rodríguez Moñino. It was his tertulia, and he and his wife-- They had no children. The children were the tertulia.

SMITH: In terms of the Portuguese material in the book, where did you get your source material, and did you spend a fair amount of time in Portugal?

KUBLER: We lived in Portugal for several stretches and took the trouble to learn Portuguese and speak it.

SMITH: You'd mentioned the Brazilian material you had to go to Belgium for. What was the reason for that?

KUBLER: That search was for Brazilian material in Minas Gerais. The Franciscan shrines, places like Conoñas do Campo. Then that grew out of Portugal, of course, and the architecture of Portugal. The eighteenth-century architecture of Portugal was the matrix, together with some south German and Austrian influences.

REESE: With the exception of the early draft for the Pelican pre-Columbian volume of '51, '52, the Ars

Hispaniae volume, which came out in '57, was the first of the three, followed by the Pelican Spain and Latin America, and finally the pre-Columbian volume. It was the first to appear. Was it the first one you wrote, and did you indeed write it during these times in Spain?

KUBLER: The pre-Columbian volume?

REESE: No. I'm thinking now of the Ars Hispaniae, Arquitectura de los siglos XVII y XVIII.

KUBLER: I wrote much of that in Spain.

REESE: So it was the first really to be completed. In an oral history like this, one doesn't know how much one puts on the personal record, but I remember as a student of yours using the cards, the research cards, that you had used in compiling that. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about the way in which, if you remember, you organized material in preparing one of these large-scale attempts at synthesis.

KUBLER: Well, I had little histories of each building on those cards and could refresh my memory, and these gave references to other literature. This was an index for the writing. And then the collection of photographs. Those were the instruments with which I wrote.

SMITH: To what degree did you integrate the writing of these books into your teaching? Would you try out ideas for particular buildings or even for chapters in lectures?

KUBLER: I don't think I used them much in teaching. When they were available, especially the ones in English, I would put them on the reading list. But the ones that weren't in English I would suggest to the ones who read Spanish or Portuguese.

SMITH: Did the classes you were teaching begin to shift towards Iberian architecture?

KUBLER: It depended on what I offered. I would change the offering from year to year, and it would bring out a different crowd.

SMITH: What I'm wondering is if, since you were spending so much time thinking about Spain and Portugal and the colonial period, would then that mean that the lecture classes you would offer, and the seminars, would tend to be focused more on that period? And then as you shift into ancient America--?

KUBLER: That would be a different group.

SMITH: But from the point of view of how teaching and research interact, you know, would you use the teaching to test out ideas for the books?

KUBLER: Especially in seminars, yes. Yes. That wouldn't be possible in an undergraduate lecture course. That's very difficult. It's not built for discussion, but the seminar is.

REESE: I remember that the research cards for the Ars

Hispaniae volume had three sections: one on architects, one on buildings organized geographically, and a third which was organized by a series of problems, the development of a certain form of mental pattern. So that they were largely very laconic and factual in content. What I'm trying to reconstruct a little bit is in the actual process of writing on the road-- Oh, I left out-- There was a fourth thing, which were the large volumes of photographs, which were arranged geographically. In writing the material on the road, at that point, were you consulting all of these cards or were you ready to write a given section? It seems to me a very different enterprise than some of the others because of the complicated chronological-- The complicated areas of histories, different types of monuments. And to do this while you're actually moving rather than laying everything out.

KUBLER: Well, actually, I traveled with quite a few books. We had a station wagon. There was room. This wouldn't have been possible without a car, but I did pack a library with me.

SMITH: In these two volumes, these companion volumes, Ars Hispaniae and Pelican, it seems this is the first time when you must come to grips with the question of biography of individual artists or architects, and in many cases readers would be expecting to learn about the individual

responsible for the building. Yet I think you have a distinct opinion about the place of biography in art history. How did that opinion develop in the course of working on this book, determining how you were going to treat the role of the individual artist?

KUBLER: Oh, that was a change with each building that I took up. It was building oriented or city oriented. It was designed more as groups of architectural monuments, and the personalities are really secondary.

SMITH: But that's an interpretive choice. Another art historian might have decided to organize it around individual architects and schools.

REESE: Clearly [Rudolf] Wittkower had done that in his Pelican volume.

SMITH: You had to think that question through as to why the placement and the buildings would be more primary than the individual artist and passing down the traditions.

KUBLER: The grouping was by style and similarities connecting the personalities, rather than by the personalities.

SMITH: On the obvious level, it seems like you were taking many of the things that you would do naturally with Latin American or ancient American architecture-- Where the question of an individual artist is beside the point.

KUBLER: Maybe they share that. [laughter] And,

actually, Spanish architectural personalities are not very concrete. They are not very definitive. They're mostly _maestros de obras_, which is perhaps a medieval survival.

REESE: Did you find the process of writing the Ars Hispaniae volume, in some way, greater in terms of difficulty than the previous volumes you had written? Was there a complexity of scale?

KUBLER: No, I didn't find it difficult. It went easily. It went easily, and even though we were on the move so much, there was always time.

SMITH: A minor technical question, but did you write that book originally in Spanish?

KUBLER: No.

SMITH: Did you do the Spanish translation, then, yourself?

KUBLER: No. That was done by the editors. That was commissioned by the editors.

REESE: Did you write it in a linear way from beginning to end?

KUBLER: No, more sketches and bits and episodes and outlines. Then when those had reached a certain volume, revision and revision and correction, verification, usually done in New Haven.

SMITH: I'd like to end today by discussing the communication and interaction between American and

European art historians in the postwar period and the development of international congresses and so forth. You began to go to Europe very quickly. It seems to me you have a number of different national traditions with different ways of conducting scholarly research, different ways of teaching, different ways of writing. The process of communication and interaction. What I'm trying to get at is, perhaps, what were the common denominators that brought people together?

KUBLER: Well, the ideal situation was the residencia in Madrid. That was the center of the network of university minds. Otherwise, it was the equivalent in a city. In Barcelona, Instituto Amatller and the Arquiv Mas, and the university people there getting in touch with the university in Valencia or in Sevilla. Sevilla is a wonderful place to work with excellent libraries and very accessible professorial groups.

SMITH: How important were international congresses at this time for meeting people and sharing ideas?

KUBLER: Not very productive. Not very rewarding. You went and gave your paper, and there was rarely any discussion of the paper at an international congress. Any discussion is in the reviews of the publication of the proceedings. But making acquaintances was very valuable. A congress, like a train trip, is a place where you don't

make many friends. [laughter] You're lucky if you make one friend, and one friend per congress would be quite a lot. Actually, most congresses I attended, I had one connection who would be more or less permanent.

SMITH: To what degree was an international art historical language developing based on pre-Nazi German developments? The Germans came to the U.S. and became the dominant force here. They went to England and were similar--

KUBLER: During the nineteenth century, you mean.

SMITH: No, in the twentieth century, in the postwar period.

KUBLER: In the postwar period. Well, the exiles, you're speaking of the exiles.

SMITH: Right.

KUBLER: Well, the exiles were a great resource for their hosts.

SMITH: Do you think they provided an intellectual framework that allowed different national traditions to come together?

KUBLER: Very much so. In the Institute for Advanced Study [Princeton University], which is not a teaching institution, and in the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. But that's it. There aren't others, unless-- What would you think there was?

SMITH: Oh, here in the U.S.?

KUBLER: Yes.

SMITH: Well, I think perhaps those two are sufficient, because they trained everybody.

KUBLER: Yes. That's it.

SMITH: And in England the Courtauld [Institute] was sufficient. When you spent a year at Cambridge [University]--

KUBLER: It was a spring or summer term. It was a summer term. Pevsner arranged for me to be a guest in King's College.

SMITH: Was that most productive for you in terms of the ancient America work?

KUBLER: I was writing, yes.

SMITH: You were not teaching at that time?

KUBLER: I was not teaching.

SMITH: Or lecturing?

KUBLER: I wrote, and the Haddon Library, which is an anthropological library, was very useful. I worked there. I had friends there who were interested in what I was doing. That was rewarding.

SMITH: British anthropologists or art historians?

KUBLER: Geoffrey Bushnell. Geoffrey Bushnell was an Americanist, and he was of a different stock of Bushnells from Betty's.

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SMITH: Was he [Bushnell] also writing about Mesoamerica?

KUBLER: Yes. The museum had an interesting collection.

SMITH: How did other scholars react to the idea of writing a book combining Mesoamerica with the Andean culture? Did that seem like something that was a reasonable thing to do?

KUBLER: It had been done before. There were other efforts to do it, as well as mine.

SMITH: You did not consider it too big a chunk to chew off?

KUBLER: No, because I'd taught it that way.

REESE: I think that there's one other thing that we might be able to finish up with, and that is the first Ph.D. students who wrote for you in the fifties. Spielvogel on Wari, John Hoag on Spanish sixteenth century, Donald Robertson on manuscript illumination, and Peg [Margaret] Collier on eighteenth-century Mexico. I wonder if you could reflect a little on the growth of the profession at that point and the emergence of the first new doctoral students really interested in the fields they had pioneered.

KUBLER: Well, those names you mentioned all did good

work. The one who went farthest was Donald Robertson--Tulane [University]. Spielvogel, I think as a mother and housewife, rather dropped out, but she did a good paper, the Wari paper. And the other names?

REESE: John Hoag.

KUBLER: John Hoag has stayed in the profession as an Americanist, but he has many other interests as well. He's a polymath, and he doesn't produce much writing, but he's a valued teacher. He's now retired.

REESE: He had taught with you here briefly at Yale [University] or taught here in the department?

KUBLER: I don't think he taught in the department, no, no.

REESE: Peg Collier.

KUBLER: She is now a professor at the University of Connecticut at Storrs. She's very valued there, but she doesn't write anything. On the other hand, she had the initiative to discover the documents necessary for the study of that lovely annex to the cathedral of Mexico.

REESE: The Sagrario.

KUBLER: She had access to those documents. And she wrote a book about it, and she's never published that. She's never brought it out. Other scholars have been eager to have that material appear, but she never published.

REESE: Are there any other--?

KUBLER: Who else was there?

REESE: I think that is the group that I--

KUBLER: That was the group, yes.

REESE: I think that Betsy [Elizabeth] Smith comes later, in the sixties.

KUBLER: Betsy Smith, yes, yes.

REESE: Or finishes in the sixties. But were there any other early students who you remember as important? Perhaps who went on to other institutions to do their work?

KUBLER: No, I can't think of any offhand.

REESE: Joseph Baird was never a student of yours, was he?

KUBLER: No. We corresponded a lot. He went West, didn't he? He came from the West. He was an architectural historian, and he wrote a book.

SMITH: I think we'll discuss the ancient America book primarily tomorrow morning, but I wanted to find out how, in the fifties, your calendrical studies were continuing, and perhaps were you beginning to study Maya glyphs at this time.

KUBLER: All of this came out of the teaching, and these grew out of the teaching. I didn't go very far with them. The closest approach to a discovery in Maya glyphic terms was a paper I did at a time when I was associated with the [Yale] university museum and a group there. I decided to

study the glyphs of Tikal in a formal sense--their formal properties rather than their significant aspect--and found a chronological ordering of the glyphs of Tikal according to their proportional schemes. That I gave as a paper in a congress at a gathering in Guatemala, but it was never published. I think it's a valid paper and a paper that is worth publishing. I'm trying to get it published now, but it's way out of date.

SMITH: Did you drop the glyph work because you had too much other things to work on?

KUBLER: I had other things. Yes, I was watching with Mary Miller the breaking of the code. They were doing it very rapidly and very swiftly, very productively, and I dropped out of that game. [laughter]

SMITH: Could you give a thumbnail sketch of [Tatiana] Proskouriakoff?

KUBLER: She was always a research scholar at the Peabody Museum [of Archaeology and Ethnology] and much respected, a field archaeologist in many important minor excavations. She was very important in the decipherment problem and in the architectural history of the Mayas, being trained as an architect, so that she produced wonderful drawings of the ruins and made important discoveries in respect to the glyphs.

SMITH: Was she someone that you could have relatively

frequent conversations with?

KUBLER: Oh, yes. We met frequently and discussed.

SMITH: Did she have an art historical interest?

KUBLER: I think she was almost more of an art historian than an anthropologist. She was very rigorous in her demands. She didn't think the archaeology of others was up to her standards. She was not very charitable to her colleagues--and hard to persuade of anything she didn't believe.

SMITH: Would that make her, for you, a particularly good person to throw ideas off of?

KUBLER: Yes. I enjoyed trying things out on her.

REESE: Was there a Peabody/Harvard [University] school or was it merely an assortment of interesting individuals?

KUBLER: It was a school. It was a school--the training school--very much so. It was a training center, an important training center.

REESE: Gordon Willey--

KUBLER: Gordon Willey, he's now retired.

REESE: When did you first meet?

KUBLER: I first knew him when he was at the Smithsonian [Institution], and I think he was of influence at the Smithsonian in getting my paper published on demography. When I was there he was more or less in charge of Peruvian studies, as a Peruvianist.

REESE: There is one more personality whom I was reminded of as you spoke about Proskouriakoff, and that was Charlot.

KUBLER: Jean Charlot, yes. Jean Charlot was also closely associated with the Carnegie Institution of Washington, which is what we're really talking about with Proskouriakoff and Gordon Willey and the others. Peabody Museum, the whole Peabody Museum setup, was where the Carnegie Institution had its archaeological center, so that all of my archaeology was run from Peabody Museum.

REESE: And was Charlot a close friend of yours?

KUBLER: Charlot was very active in Maya archaeology at the time of the excavations and publication of Chichen Itzá, and that was done by the Carnegie Institution of Washington in conjunction with Peabody Museum. Jean Charlot later left archaeology and returned to teaching art. He was an artist to start with.

SMITH: A muralist.

KUBLER: A muralist, yes.

SMITH: I believe he wound up at the University of Hawaii.

KUBLER: Yes, he ended up in Hawaii.

SMITH: In all of this you find time to write The Shape of Time: [Remarks on the History of Things]. Perhaps we can just discuss how that came to be written.

KUBLER: Well, that I owed to a respite afforded by a bout

with tuberculosis. I had had it at the age of twelve, was cured in Arosa in the Kindersanitorium there. Then I had another bout at the time of the writing of Shape of Time. That's when it was written. I was in a hospital we had for tuberculosis, the Gaylord Farm out here in the country, and fortunately the chemotherapy for TB had just been devised. This is '49, '50.

SMITH: No. You wrote The Shape of Time in '59, '60.

KUBLER: 'Fifty-nine. I'm skipping a cog. [laughter] So I was interned again in Gaylord in '59 for about three months and with the new chemotherapy. It was entirely successful. Just in time, just in time.

SMITH: Perhaps it provided you the three months of nothing else to do?

KUBLER: That's right. That's right, and I did nothing else but The Shape of Time.

SMITH: Had you been planning on writing that book previously?

KUBLER: Yes. I'd been keeping notes of ideas.

SMITH: What impelled you to want to write a book of that nature?

KUBLER: Perhaps it was a book by Focillon called La Vie des formes [laughter]--a continuation of the Vie des formes.

SMITH: You had mentioned, when we talked in November,

that this book was looked upon quite askance by many of your colleagues in the art history field.

KUBLER: They don't have to buy it. [laughter] It's a book that is more interesting to [people] outside the history of art than in the history of art.

SMITH: Well, I think we'll discuss the content tomorrow, along with ancient American art, because as I was rereading the introduction to the second Pelican volume, I remembered that there are many echoes between the two.

KUBLER: Oh, yes. There are exchanges between the books, yes.

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